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FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

Abortion supporters return to D.C.

Hundreds of thousands turn out in Washington, but controversial issues surround the march

By John Zeh

WASHINGTON — Against a backdrop of heightened mainstream focus on abortion and reproductive rights issues, hundreds of thousands of pro-choice women and men turned out for a march and rally here November 12. Abortion rights activists counted the crowd at 300,000 while the U.S. Park Police halved that number. Despite the successful showing, however, calls for more lesbian visibility within the abortion rights movement and action on the local, as well as national, level surrounded the march.

"Sunday began a 51-week count-down to the 1990 elections," said Kate Michelman, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL). "We will register voters, get out the vote, and stand behind candidates who stand with us on choice. [This] is the beginning of our mobilization to make the 1990s the Decade of Choice."

The National Organization for Women was the primary sponsor of the "Mobilization for Women's Lives," which included coordinated demonstrations in many cities across the country, in addition to the convergence on the capitol.

Folksinger Ronnie Gilbert was cheered by the crowd when she introduced Holly Near's "anthem for the '80s," written after the assassination of "two wonderful men," San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk. And Pete Seeger, Mary Travers, and Peter Yarrow called for unity among progressive movements singing, "We are a gentle, angry people...gay and straight together...daughters, wives, and mothers...in a land of many colors...singing for our lives."

But controversy about the mobilization surfaced both before and during the event. Many grassroots pro-choice groups insisted on decentralized actions instead of a single event, and over 200 anti-abortionists were arrested despite injunctions from two federal judges barring Operation Rescue from blocking clinics. ACT UP/New York "refrained" from endorsing the event until mobilization leaders promised participation on stage from a lesbian. "We believe that NOW does not recognize lesbian and AIDS issues as part of the reproductive rights agenda...[and] historically, NOW has not recognized lesbians as being equal members," said ACT UP's Garance Franke-Ruta in an interview prior to the action.

Organizers of the march were also concerned about attendance and worried that a low turn-out might result in criticism that the pro-choice movement is short on muscle and continuity.

As a compromise, the organizers called for demonstrations, voter-registration drives, church services, and rallies around the country to supplement the event here and show staying power.

Post-'Webster' work

Abortion rights activists have mobilized

en masse since July when the high court handed down *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, giving states more freedom to restrict abortions. While pro-choice and abortion rights activists were universally angered and shaken up by *Webster*, there has been disagreement about which strategies should be employed now. Debate about the November 12 march in D.C. points to aspects of that disagreement.

"*Webster* has given state politicians the power to interfere with a woman's most personal decision," NARAL's Michelman told the crowd. "That is why this nationwide mobilization [needed] to demonstrate strength at the local level as well as in Washington."

But some supporters had insisted that the cost of running one huge event would drain resources needed to boost ongoing efforts to combat challenges in state capitals and to support pro-choice candidates for election. In addition, the November 12 march came just six months after a demonstration in April attracted 600,000 people. Some activists emphasized decentralizing the fight now, saying the real battleground in on the state levels.

"It makes more sense to focus on state legislatures," said lesbian activist Carol Ann Douglas, a member of the *off our backs* feminist newspaper collective here. "They're the ones who will be making the laws." Douglas said she found the call for a single action in D.C. "upsetting" because "abortion is a state-by-state issue."

In October, abortion rights activists were both pleased and disappointed by the legislative actions in various states. Pro-choice forces won a major victory in Florida when they defeated all measures proposed by Gov. Bob Martinez who had called a special legislative session to consider abortion issues in light of *Webster*.

But in late October, the Pennsylvania House became the first state legislative body to pass a bill limiting abortions. It requires a 24-hour waiting period before the procedure, forbids an abortion after 24 weeks unless the life of the mother is endangered, and requires notification of the husband except in special circumstances. The state Senate is currently considering the measure.

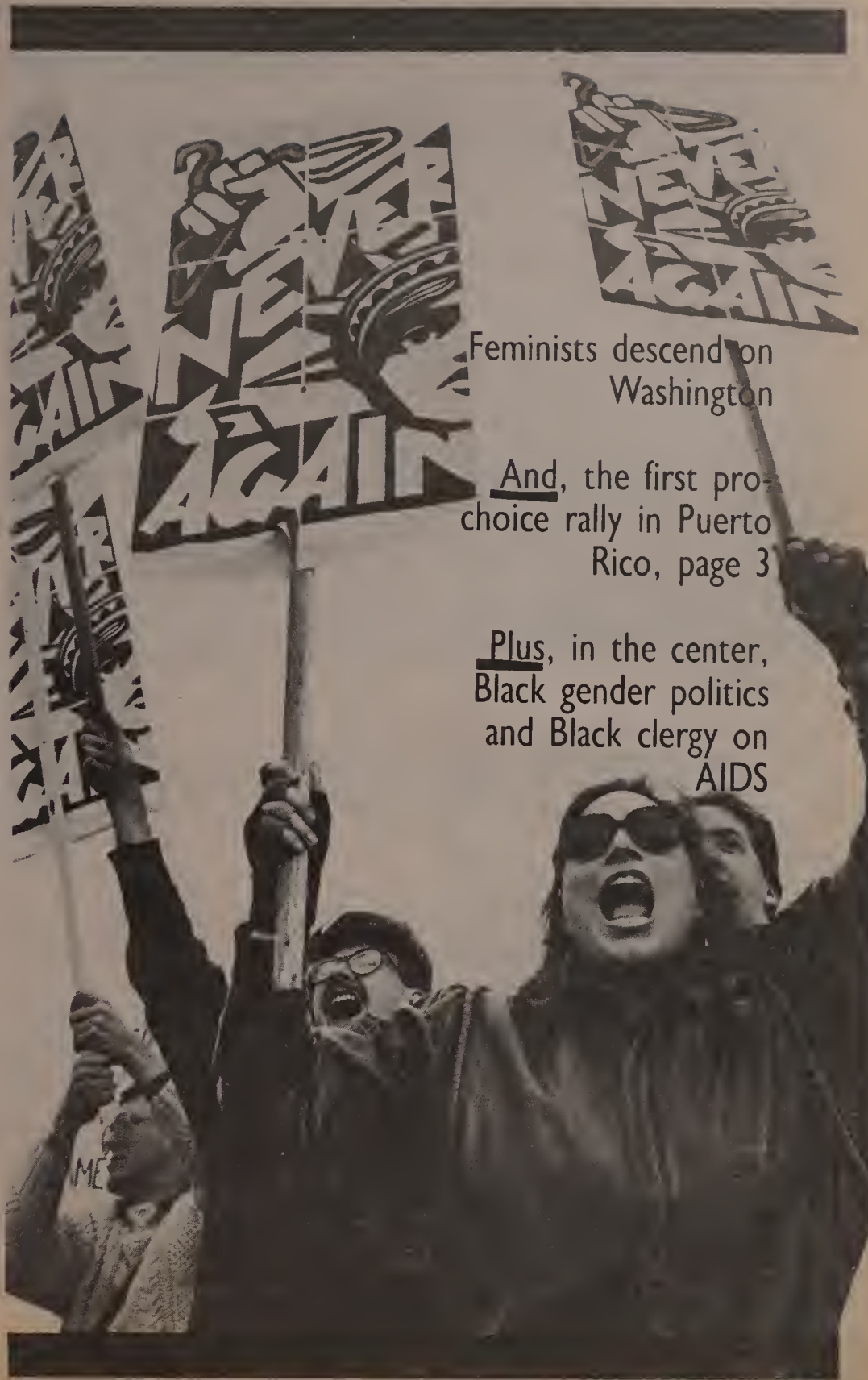
Privacy

Organizers of the march emphasized the right to privacy as a link between abortion rights and lesbian and gay issues.

"Lesbians and gays have a deep visceral understanding of the importance of the right to privacy," said NOW mobilization director Sheri O'Dell. "*Roe v. Wade* is grounded in the right to privacy, a right which all of us have a stake in, not just women."

Tim McFeeley, head of the Human Rights Campaign Fund, echoed O'Dell's emphasis on drawing the connection between the abortion rights and gay and lesbian move-

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Feminists descend on Washington

And, the first pro-choice rally in Puerto Rico, page 3

Plus, in the center, Black gender politics and Black clergy on AIDS

Gay Black man wins in Albany

Keith St. John becomes the first Black openly-gay official in the U.S.

By Jennie McKnight

ALBANY, N.Y. — Keith St. John became the first openly-gay Black elected official in the U.S. Nov. 7 when he won a seat on the Albany City Council. En route to his victory in the general election, St. John defeated the Democratic incumbent who was backed by the party machine that has long dominated city politics here.

"What's exciting [about St. John's victory]" said Black lesbian feminist Barbara Smith, is that it sends a positive message to Black lesbians and gay men "who up to now thought it was not possible to be out and gay." Smith, who lives in Albany, added, "Keith proved that not only can you be out, you can win."

St. John told *GCN* his election victory was the culmination of "an ambition I've had for many years now." He described his desire to run for elective office as part of his goal to be active at the community level. As a legal services lawyer and member of several non-profit community groups, St. John said he has "taken people's interests and needs and promoted and protected them." While legal representation can help individuals who faced discrimination, St. John said elective office is appealing because it will allow him to have an impact at the policy level.

St. John and his campaign manager, Ernest Reaugh, said the candidate's sexuality was publicly known, but a "non-issue" in the campaign. As an identifiable leader in Albany's organized lesbian and gay community and because he served as a gay representative on the police department's community relations panel, St. John was known publicly as gay. But instead of running as a gay candidate, according to Reaugh, St. John ran as "a candidate who happened to be gay." Instead, he said he raised issues in his campaign that were of primary importance to the constituents in his ward.

According to Reaugh, Albany's Ward 2 is largely composed of low-to-moderate in-

come voters, 60 percent of whom are Black.

The issues important to those constituents, and the focus of St. John's campaign, include affordable housing, homelessness, job training, drugs and child care. Although he moved to Ward 2 specifically to run for office, St. John said he had a good relationship with the area and the issues important to the people who lived there through his work as a legal services attorney.

Reaugh said St. John's victory was especially impressive since there is no visible organized gay constituency in Ward 2. Although last-minute attempts were made in both the primary and the general elections to create homophobic backlash against St. John (inflammatory flyers were posted in the Ward on the weekends before both elections), St. John swept to victory Nov. 7 with 75 percent of the electorate. St. John said he thought the voters responded to his focus on important issues and promise to work hard for his constituents.

St. John used the traditional campaign tactics of going out to the voters and communicating his agenda to as many people as possible. One particularly successful means of reaching voters was attending Black churches in the Ward, where he was warmly received by members and religious leaders alike.

The lopsided margin of victory in the general election came only after a tough and narrowly won battle in the primary. The final tally in the primary gave him a three-vote margin, amid charges that party officials tried to "steal" the election through the absentee ballot system. St. John's primary opponent, Arthur Scott had enjoyed two terms as Alderman for Ward 2 and had the backing of the party. But St. John and other progressives said they identified Scott as a vulnerable candidate because voters in Ward 2 were likely to respond to a candidate representing an alter-

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Quote of the week

"Sometimes I believe the greatest damage done to persons with AIDS is done by the dishonesty of those health care professionals who refuse to confront the moral dimensions of sexual aberrations or drug abuse. Good morality is good medicine."

— *Noted homophobe John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York, in the New York Times. O'Connor addressed the first Vatican conference on AIDS in Rome on November 13. In his remarks, O'Connor also discussed the "contempt" reserved for prisoners who have AIDS, saying, "There is more than one horror story of a prisoner's being thrown into a solitary cell and left to die."*

But who's counting anyway?

BOSTON — A Nov. 13 story in the *Boston Globe* about the D.C. abortion rights march included a sidebar of a "sampling" of other major marches held in the nation's capital over the past 30 years. *GCN* readers will note that there is one glaring and blatant omission from this list.

When contacted by *GCN*, the writer of the story, Eileen McNamara, said that she collected all her data for the sidebar from the capital Park Police in Washington. The *Globe* printed a correction two days later that apologized for omitting "the National March for Gay and Lesbian Rights on Oct. 11, 1987, which attracted an estimated 200,000 participants."

Since gay men and lesbians know that the March on Washington drew at least 700,000, the statistics cited for the above marches are questionable to say the least. As long as police continue to deliberately underestimate crowd participation and as long as the straight press relies on their figures, is it surprising that the largest ever march on Washington is rendered invisible?

□ Kelly Gaines

stitution, a federal prison, was denied permission to receive conjugal visits from his lover, Les Beu, by prison officials. Since federal prison policy here permits heterosexual inmates to have conjugal visits of up to 72 hours every three to six months, Veysey charged discrimination and took the case to court.

Veysey argued that the prison's policy violated Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, part of the Canadian constitution. Section 15, which forbids discrimination on the grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability, does not explicitly forbid discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. However, many legal experts and gay activists have contended that the general language of the section, which bans all discrimination and not just the listed categories, would extend to sexual orientation.

The counsel for the federal prison system contended that the policy was not discriminatory because Veysey would be allowed conjugal visits by a woman, just like heterosexual inmates.

In his groundbreaking ruling, Justice Jean-Eude Dube of the Trials Division of the Federal Court of Canada noted that human rights legislation in three provinces (Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba) and the Yukon Territory already prohibits sexual orientation discrimination. Saying that the policy was contrary to the Charter, Dube overturned the existing prison policy on conjugal visits and ruled that gay men and lesbians are covered by Section 15. Gay people, said Dube, have been "victimized and stigmatized throughout history because of prejudice — mostly based on fear or ignorance, as most prejudices are."

The Federal Court of Canada hears cases involving federal government regulations and its decisions are appealable only to its own Appeals Division and to the Supreme Court of Canada. Federal officials have 30 days in which to file an appeal.

□ Kelly Gaines

Union jobs available

BOSTON — An informational program for anyone interested in a union apprenticeship will be held Nov. 27 at 7 p.m. at the IBEW Union Hall, 256 Freeport St. in Dorchester. Childcare will be provided.

The IBEW Electrical Apprentice Program is accepting applications until Dec. 4. Skilled, licensed, union jobs with good pay and benefits are available. Interested people can apply at the Joint Apprentice Training Center, 80 Crescent Ave., Newton Centre. Women and people of color are particularly encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact Phil Mason at 527-6811.

□ Karen O'Donnell

Prison AIDS Resource Center

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The Health Advocates Coalition, a nonprofit organization, has announced its creation of the first agency established specifically to address AIDS issues in prisons and jails, the Prison AIDS Resource Center (PARC). Seed money has been provided by "In Concert Against AIDS," and PARC expressed particular appreciation to the Grateful Dead for their support.

PARC has been established in order to: promote the development of community-based AIDS services in prisons and jails; coordinate a network of AIDS service providers working in prisons and jails; develop a database of resource and referral information on issues relevant to AIDS in prisons and jails for use by AIDS service providers, prisoner support organizations, public health agencies, legislators and other policy makers, and prisoners and their loved ones; develop and disseminate materials, programs and information designed to assist in the healing process and prevent further unnecessary illness; and to research and make available current AIDS policy, legal issues and resources relevant to prisoners and their loved ones.

For more information write to PARC's mailing address: c/o Cia Lynn, Prison AIDS Resource Center, Box 1206, Sacramento, CA 95812. Any contributions or donations of office equipment, furniture and supplies would be welcome.

□ Mike Riegler

Sexual orientation discrimination ruled unconstitutional

TORONTO — A Canadian superior court ruled Nov. 6 that discrimination against gay men and lesbians is unconstitutional.

Tim Veysey, an inmate of Warkworth In-

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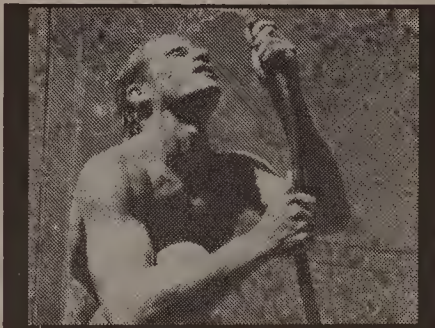
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The marches on Washington: a sampling

WASHINGTON — Demonstrators have converged on Washington a number of times in the past three decades. This sampling of the largest rallies reflects crowd estimates by the National Park Service.

■ **August 1963:** A civil rights march was led by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., who delivered his "I Have A Dream Speech." About 250,000 people attended.

■ **November 1969:** An antiwar march, sponsored by the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, drew 250,000 people.

■ **April 1971:** An antiwar march, sponsored by the National Peace Action Coalition, drew 200,000.

■ **September 1981:** A Solidarity Day march, sponsored by civil rights and labor organizations, was held to protest Reagan administration's economic policies. About 260,000 attended.

■ **August 1983:** A civil rights march marked the 20th anniversary of the rally led by King. About 300,000 attended.

■ **April 1989:** A march for Women's Equality, Women's Lives, a demonstration to demand the preservation of abortion rights, drew about 300,000.

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PWA drop-in center opens

The Boston Living Center marks a turning point in local AIDS-care philosophy

By Steve Rose

BOSTON — Hundreds of people with HIV, ARC and AIDS, their advocates and supporters, and local officials celebrated the Oct. 15 opening of a newly refurbished drop-in center for people living with HIV, marking a turning point in Boston's AIDS-care philosophy.

The Boston Living Center's new home, the seventh floor of the YWCA Building on Clarendon Street in the Back Bay, is directly across the street from the AIDS Action Committee's (AAC) Boston office.

Those involved with the Living Center repeatedly stressed the new niche it has carved out in the continuum of AIDS services, augmenting the health care and client advocacy orientations of the Fenway Community Health Center and the AAC. The center has many flexible, multi-use rooms, which include a library, music room, kitchen, childcare space, meeting rooms and offices. The Center also hopes to provide a daily drop-in lunch, movie nights, classes and — possibly — a theater company.

"It provides a service that's badly needed and that isn't available anywhere else," said AIDS advocate Mark Schueppert. Organizers say that outreach to all communities affected by the epidemic has been a major focus of the Center. "There are lots of women with AIDS who have kids," and who need childcare facilities while they visit doctors or meet with the AAC staff pointed out Living Center volunteer Anna Beth Winograd.

The Living Center's Jane Morris expounded on the community-wide attraction of the concept. "Boston's general community has been wonderful.... What's exciting is that this is a new trend — we are here to celebrate."

Liz Hardy-Jackson, the only paid staffer at the Center, was equally enthusiastic. "It's a very impressive turnout, not only in terms of the community in general but of the PWA and HIV-positive community. Like the Center's co-founder, Mel Reicher, Hardy-Jackson got involved via the Names Project as a quilt maker. "At that point, memorializing was an important part of the process," but then, she said, her view evolved. "We got to talking about direct services." The Center will be about "direct contact," she said.

Although political activists and office-holders were present, the spotlight was clearly on the 100 volunteers — PWAs, HIV-positives and their friends — who hosted the event, which took on the tenor of a house party and featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The emphasis on PWAs is indicative of the Center's philosophy. "The scope of the services will be determined by and for the specific needs of the PWA community," says the organization's brochure.

In spite of this emphasis on PWA empowerment, many of the guest speakers at the ribbon-cutting ceremony were from traditional officialdom — such as Boston Mayor Ray Flynn, Lt. Governor Evelyn Murphy, state Secretary of Human Services Phillip Johnston and Commissioner of Health David Mulligan. The noticeable lack of activist-wing presence or representatives from Fenway Community Health Center or the Community Research Initiative of New England resulted in minimal attention to AIDS treatment issues.

Mulligan garnered spirited applause when he proclaimed his pleasure at the historic coincidence of two events. "To have this

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Historic pro-choice rally in Puerto Rico draws 200

Supporters of reproductive rights hold their first public demonstration

By Ana Ortiz

SAN JUAN — In the first public gathering of pro-choice activists here, a spirited crowd of 200 rallied in front of the capitol building Nov. 12 to show support for the preservation of abortion rights in Puerto Rico. There was a festive mood at the historic demonstration, which was timed to

choice leaflets. With few exceptions, passers-by expressed curiosity about and support for the action. Even police officers who were assigned to the demonstration were seen collecting literature about contraception.

The demonstrators emphasized the pres-

ervation of minors' rights and called for men to come forward in support of choice. In addition to using slogans commonly heard and seen at pro-choice rallies in the U.S., the crowd chanted "If I'm old enough to give birth, I'm old enough to choose," and "Companero, give your opinion, but remember it's her decision."

"We are here to say that pro-option is pro-life, and that Puerto Rican women and

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Dukakis signs the gay rights bill into law, Nov. 15

Dukakis signs gay rights bill

Even as lesbian and gay rights advocates celebrate victory, they ready themselves for a 1990 referendum

By Carrie Wofford

BOSTON — As 200 activists and supporters cheered enthusiastically, Governor Michael Dukakis signed into law H. 5427, the Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights bill, on Nov. 15. Massachusetts lesbians, gay men and bisexuals now join Wisconsin in being guaranteed protection in the areas of housing, employment, public accommodations and credit.

"Brothers and sisters in the gay and lesbian community, this day is ours!" crowed Steven Tierney of the Massachusetts Gay-bian Political Caucus. "Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is wrong, we've always known that," said Arline Isaacson, the Caucus' other co-chair. "But after today, it can be illegal."

Community activists were encouraged and jubilant about Wednesday's signing, but are still gearing up for a potential fight. Former state Sen. Royall Switzler (R-Wellesley) is trying to repeal the law by putting it on the 1990 ballot in a state-wide referendum. Switzler may encounter trouble, according to David LaFontaine, lobbyist for the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights, after the release of a recent *Boston Globe* poll, which reported that 70 percent of Massachusetts voters polled said they would vote to keep the law.

"It's a good day," Dukakis told the audience. "[MCAD director] Alex Rodriguez and the [Massachusetts] Commission Against Discrimination are ready to begin enforcing this new law." Dukakis praised state legislators who had worked on the bill over the past 17 years and proclaimed Massachusetts as a state in the forefront of civil rights struggles.

If the bill follows its normal course, and Dukakis does not write an emergency preamble to implement the bill immediately (as he is considering doing), then "We will have jurisdiction in 90 days," Judith Kelley Wright, an MCAD spokesperson, told *GCN*.

According to Freddie Kay, the assistant legal counsel to the governor, the civil rights bill inserts language into Chapter 151b which describes the functions of MCAD, which receives and investigates charges of discrimination. Therefore, the gay and lesbian civil rights bill is not actually a separate law, but adds sexual orientation to the existing list of protected categories — religious sect, creed, class, race, color, denomination, sex, national origin and, now, sexual orientation.

Under the law, sexual orientation is defined as "being identified as having an orientation for heterosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexuality." Further, the term is qualified each time it appears by the clause: "which shall not include persons whose sexual orientation involves minor children as the sex object," a clause that has prompted anger within the lesbian and gay community.

At the signing ceremonies, Sen. Michael Barrett (D-Cambridge), the chief sponsor in the Senate, received a long, loud stream of

applause when he stepped to the podium. "One doesn't know before it happens what it's like to be present at the signing of one of the most important civil rights acts in the past 30 or 40 years," he said.

Barrett thanked his colleagues and predecessors and the enthusiastic crowd, and spoke of the "feeling of sheer pride, jubilation, satisfaction at having seen government [do] a good piece of work." Noting the long delays and numerous dilatory tactics in the Senate, Barrett summed it up by saying, "We had an interesting time."

While most of the remarks at the ceremony focused on thank-yous and congratulations, the gay and lesbian community was also directly and explicitly acknowledged. In his remarks, chief House sponsor Rep. Mark Roosevelt (D-Boston) moved immediately to recognizing the gay men and lesbians who fought over the past 17 years. "Politicians are nice — some of us — and sometimes even quite useful. But in the end this is a real victory for the gay and lesbian community, and I will be eternally grateful to this community for [allowing] me to work with you."

Echoing this appreciation, Barrett told the audience, "You worked so hard, you demonstrated such originality in reminding us all of the privacy of civil rights...that you've reinvigorated a tradition of vigorous debate and democracy, [and] you [have] changed the State Senate for the better."

Perhaps alluding to recent conflicts and struggles between gay and lesbian lobbyists, Roosevelt offered to the crowd, "Struggle, [which] we see here before us in the history of this bill, is part of the community, and part of the search for self-affirmation; but so is celebration. We ought not to forget that."

Arline Isaacson and Steven Tierney — both of the Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus — were chosen, with some controversy among key gay lobbyists, as the representatives of the gay and lesbian community. Isaacson and Tierney congratulated the crowd, although they were disrupted by housing rights advocates — who were yelling slogans as they passed through the hall — and by admirers. "No one organization or individual can ever hope to represent the thousands of individuals" dedicated to lobbying, Isaacson said. "This victory proves that the gay and lesbian community can win if we work hard, cooperate, and refuse to stop fighting the forces of homophobia," Isaacson exclaimed. "We didn't give up!"

Isaacson quoted from some of the many letters she has received from grateful gay men and lesbians across the state. "You have no idea how much this bill means to me...[it] means that I will be safer"; "I feel free from an unbearable burden, an unbearable weight."

Rich Braun of the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights suggested to *GCN* after the signing that this bill may enable

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Women surrounding a statue made out of coat hangers perform "El Gancho," a rap song about illegal abortions, Nov. 12

coincide with NOW's National Mobilization in D.C. (see related story, p. 1). Participants chanted to the rhythms of local percussionists, created a large sculpture out of hundreds of coat hangers and enjoyed the performance of a rap song written especially for the occasion entitled "El Gancho" (the coat hanger).

Traffic moving towards Old San Juan came to a standstill as motorists stopped to observe the picket line and receive pro-

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Black History Month

Interested in contributing to next year's Black History Month supplement in GCN? Come to the first meeting of a planning committee on December 5, 6:30 p.m. at GCN's offices: 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA. If you are unable to attend, but are interested in contributing an article to the supplement, contact Kelly Gaines 617-426-4469.

Abortion rights: who defines genocide anyway?

Dear GCN:

Mr. C. Hatcher's recent discourse in the October 22-28 issue of *GCN* about the danger of allying the struggle for gay rights and reproductive rights was typically rife with the misinformation and illogic so in-

herent in the anti-choice argument. Abortion-on-demand does not exist in this country. The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision ruled that “at some point a ‘compelling state interest’ in protecting the health of the woman and the potentiality of human life permits the state to regulate some of the factors governing the abortion decision.” In order to balance the interests of the woman and of the state, the Court established the trimester evaluation system. In the first trimester of pregnancy the state may not regulate abortion at all, but in the second and third trimester, the state may regulate abortion in ways that are reasonably related to maternal health and where it is necessary for the preservation of the life and health of the mother.

To purport that society is permitting abortion simply for “the purposes of convenience” is to coldly trivialize the risks and responsibilities of carrying a pregnancy to term, giving up a child once it is born, or choosing to raise that child until adulthood. Such thinking can only come from an individual who will never have to make such a difficult decision.

I am a 32 year old, Puerto Rican lesbian who 15 years ago was faced with such a decision. At seventeen, and just coming to terms with my sexual identity, I had to decide to terminate my pregnancy. Having been raised a strict Roman Catholic, the decision was quite traumatizing to make, but it was the only alternative to carrying the pregnancy to term, dropping out of school and then having to give up the child or raise it without any financial resources. Fortunately, I could make such a decision only two years after *Roe* and five years after New York State legalized abortion. I did not have to seek out an illegal and septic procedure on some clandestine kitchen table.

Throughout my adult life, I have worked within the lesbian/gay, women's and latino(a) communities in New York City, San Francisco, L.A. and now in upstate New York. I make no apologies for working to maintain a woman's right to reproductive autonomy — my reproductive autonomy.

Considering that most abortions are performed in the first trimester (91 percent), before the conceptus becomes differentiated fetal tissue and then an embryo, the idea that abortions are being performed for sexual selection in this country is absurd. As to the theory that gay fetuses are being aborted, I can only ask what a gay fetus is and can that be determined by amniocentesis, chorionic villi testing or sonogram?

To the argument that public funding for abortion is somehow contributing to genocide, as a woman of color who was given a chance to educate herself and become financially stable so that I can become a parent now, if I wish, I define genocide as poverty and ignorance and the inability to form one's destiny as to when to bring a child into this world so that one can care for it emotionally and financially.

As long as we live in a society that is invested in keeping its young people ignorant about their own sexuality and contraception, and as long as a strident anti-choice minority is allowed to intimidate pharmaceutical companies so that in a country that once had seventeen separate agencies working on contraceptive research, today we have only one, and as long as one woman in three worldwide dies from an illegal abortion, I can only struggle to keep the choice alive for all women. I would hope that my lesbian and gay sisters and brothers can understand that the struggle to maintain one's autonomy over one's body is a common struggle for us all.

Cordially,
Micaela D. Salort
Schenectady, New York

No more than a hunk of liver

Dear GCN:

Since the writer of the letter supporting Pro-Life signs the name “Clint,” I shall have to assume that it's male. Therefore, where does he get off saying that a womyn *must* have a child she does not want when he doesn't menstruate? I stay incensed that the male dominated world seems to think they have the right to order women around and control their lives. The first three months of pregnancy, the fetus is no more than a hunk of liver as I've had what the medical world calls a spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) and can testify to just exactly what it looks like.

If gay men are going to take this stance, then it's no wonder that the lesbian and gay

Gay Community News is produced by a collective dedicated to providing coverage of events and news in the interest of gay and lesbian liberation. The collective consists of a paid staff of ten, a general membership of volunteers, and a board of directors elected by the membership.

Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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world can't co-operate and get along. Fury is the word that comes to mind over this issue.

Mother Nature has taken me out of the child bearing years, but I will continue to believe that we womin have a right to control our bodies, all by ourselves, and that no man has the right to tell us what to do with them. This is just another way to control the female segment of our society and to my mind, there's quite enough control already that we do not either want or need.

Marcy Davis
Cedartown, Ga.

Ignorance is bliss?

Dear GCN:

I recently read an article discussing the AIDS/HIV virus in prison. I enjoyed the article and thought you might be interested in how the issue is confronted here at VA Corr. Ctr. for Women.

We do not have segregation for HIV carriers until the latest stages of the virus. I believe this is a positive step for all prisoners learning to live with the virus and to live side by side. Inmates have been condemned once by the judge. They need not be further condemned due to their health and the misconceptions of the AIDS/HIV virus.

We are also offered AIDS/HIV information seminars bi-annually. They are informative and helpful by bringing the newest information to us in a place where information on current happenings in the world outside is hard to obtain.

To my knowledge I am not a carrier, however this is where my concern lies. We do not have voluntary testing for the HIV virus here. The policy of the administration is that it is in our best interest not to know.

In the past year two fellow inmates have died from having the virus. The medical treatment afforded these individuals was poor to say the least. The sooner this virus is detected the better it may be treated. I can not understand denying us voluntary testing.

Do we not have a right to know our own health?

Jean Gross
Box 1, 5-2 Hall
Goochland, VA 23063

But if each subscriber would do likewise

Dear GCN:

GCN is always short of money and people and has gone through a lot of personnel changes in the last few years which make it difficult to keep things organized. We, citizen or prisoner, young or elder, black or white, or whatever, do have a little bit of money (or stamps or time etc.) and have learned many things thru GCN and met people who have strengthened our social structures, and so forth. Therefore, I think we collectively should pool our resources (more) to strengthen GCN current activities, and to expand their (our) future.

I would like to 'practice what I preach' at this time by enclosing 5 dollars (which is about the entire balance of my prisoner account at this time, but eventually more money will come my way). Granted that isn't very much, but if each subscriber would do likewise (in addition to subscription rates) I'm sure we could make for less turnover and burnout and stress.

GCN published a 'Prisoner Seeking Friends' ad for me. It drew about 10 other prisoners. I am so grateful that words cannot express what that meant to me! Plus, over a mere emory board (considered 'dangerous contraband' in here) I ended up in the hole. On one of my worse days, 7 people wrote me. Their letters helped me regain my sanity!

GCN collects and distributes dictionaries and other books to prisoners. While others complain about prisoners, protest about criminals, GCN endeavors to encourage and educate prisoners. GCN does SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE. My job in here is a Teacher's Aide. I know about prisoner illiteracy, which is a primary factor of imprisonment.

I would hate to think what I would be like without GCN.

Dannie Miskowski
PO Box E - 185 660
Jackson, MI 49204

Now, I have to tell this story

By Ayofemi Folayan

It was a dry hot smoggy day, delivered courtesy of the Santa Ana winds. I had fallen asleep on the couch: it was simply too hot to do anything else. Although the windows were open, there was no sign of a breeze. My skin was covered with a thin sheen of perspiration.

In my dream, I was lost in the Painted Desert of Arizona. The splendid rock formations all began to look the same as I passed them for the third or fourth time. Large birds that I guessed to be buzzards circled overhead. The air hummed with oppressive heat. The powerful smell of kerosene made me wrinkle my nose and blink my eyes. I realized that the odor was in my apartment, not my dream.

Rising through the thick fog of sleep to a semi-alert state, I was overwhelmed by the odor of kerosene mixed with perspiration. I couldn't figure out where it was coming from. I rolled into a standing position and saw the man's face before I registered the short black gun in his left hand.

He was wearing oily blue coveralls, a Dodgers baseball cap, and thick military issue black workboots. His skin was a sickly

I rolled into a standing position and saw the man's face before I registered the short black gun in his left hand.

olive color and his dark hair glistened with beads of perspiration. "Take it easy," he said, "and you won't get hurt." He walked past me to the front door, swiveling his body so that his face was always toward me. He turned the key in the deadbolt and pulled the door open in a sweeping gesture that almost seemed comical. On the front porch of my little guest cottage stood two other men, dressed in similar coverall outfits and workboots. One had a cap that said "Golden Bear Brew" and the other was hatless. The two men entered the room and gently closed the door behind them.

The hatless man was so tall he had to duck to enter the room. He was a light-skinned black man with very pale grey eyes and a bushy moustache. I was still standing in front of the couch. He came toward me and smiled, a menacing grimace that revealed badly rotten teeth. "What have we got here?" he asked, appraising me with his eyes as he approached. He snapped his fingers and the other two men disappeared into the kitchen.

Within seconds the Dodger fan came back. "Stanley," he said, "there's lots of good stuff here. Should we start loading it up?"

Stanley seemed annoyed by the interruption. "Where are your car keys?" he demanded. I pointed to a ring of keys hanging from the lock. Laughing in a high-pitched cackle, he said, "This is like taking candy from a baby!" He yanked the keys out of the door and tossed them to the Dodger fan. "Where's the car?" he asked me, and I pointed again, this time to the little grey Chevette in the driveway outside the window. I remembered that the gas tank was almost empty. I had meant to stop and fill it up, but the line at the gas station had been too long.

"Okay guys, get busy and load it up." I could hear the third one grunting in the kitchen from the effort of moving my brand new microwave over to the kitchen door. The Dodger fan left me and Stanley in the living room.

"This is your lucky day," Stanley said with a smirk. "I bet it's been a long time since you had some good stuff like I'm gonna give you." As he unbuttoned his coveralls, the oily chemical smell filled the room. I wondered where these guys had been that they all stank of it. He came up beside me and pulled my face close to his by grabbing my hair. I held my face away from him. This enraged him. "Think you're too good for me, do you?" His voice was sharp and loud, pounding into my ears like a drill. "I've always wanted to teach an uppity bitch like you a thing or two."

In some corner of my mind, I heard the kitchen door slam as he roughly forced my lips apart with his tongue. "You're gonna

love this," he said, reaching inside my tank top and squeezing my breast. He pulled a gun from his pocket and asked quietly, "Aren't you?"

"Please, don't do this," I pleaded. "You can have the car, anything, just please don't hurt me."

"Are you going to beg?" he asked, kicking me so hard in the abdomen that I fell to the floor. "Go ahead, beg!" he snarled, grabbing me by my hair and pulling me up to a kneeling position. "What's the matter? I can't hear you!" he taunted me. He rammed the pistol into my groin. "Maybe you'd rather I shot it off, you stupid little bitch."

He half dragged, half pushed me into the bedroom. "Take off your fucking clothes," he commanded.

I sat on the end of my bed and kicked off my sandals. As I went to pull the tank top over my head, he grabbed it and twisted it around my throat, choking off my breath. "You are going to do exactly what I tell you to do. Do you understand me?" As I nodded, he released the shirt, then slapped me hard across the left side of my face. "Now hurry up and get out of those fucking clothes." Quickly, I pulled off my shorts and underpants and sat with my arms crossed over my breasts.

I tried to think of some reason for this to happen, as he pulled his erect penis out of the coveralls and pushed it into me, knocking me back onto the bed in the same motion. He just kept banging into me, his anger driving each stroke. I was too scared to cry or scream. I just prayed it would be over soon. I heard the other two men enter the room, but I was in too much agony to even care.

"Hey, Stanley, no fair, man. We should get a turn, too," the Dodger fan said.

"Wait...just...a...goddamn...minute," Stanley gasped as he concentrated on reaching his climax. I felt the warm liquid surging into me, and wanted to vomit. He stood up, pushed his limp penis back inside his coveralls, and said, "Who wants seconds?"

I thought I was going to pass out, but some cruel joke of nature kept me conscious as the Dodger fan climbed onto me and began ramming into me. He kept saying things like, "Don't you love it, baby?" and "This is better than that guy can do, now isn't it?" but there was a huge roaring in my ears that slowly drowned out his voice.

Something snapped. I went out of my body. I was in a huge field, with the sun gently warming the skin on my back as I slept. The air was heavy with the smell of jasmine and roses. I felt so light I thought I would fly away any second. Instead, I was jerked back to the reality of the Dodger fan releasing a hot stream of semen into my body. "Your turn, Geronimo," he said to the guy in the Golden Bear cap.

"I don't want your seconds, man" Geronimo said. His coveralls pulled tight across his bulging pectoral and biceps muscles. His skin was a deep rust color, and his hair hung down thick and black from under his cap.

"Thank God," I said to myself, "Maybe he'll leave me alone." As I opened my eyes, I saw his throbbing red penis in front of my face. "Suck on it, bitch!" he ordered. "And make it good."

"Hurry up, Geronimo, we ain't got all day, man," Stanley said from the doorway. He was eating a sandwich and bits of meat were caught in his moustache. I gagged as Geronimo came in my mouth. I thought to myself, now at least they'll leave me alone.

"Get the rope, Chico," Stanley said to the Dodger fan. He pulled me up and pushed me into the dining room. My legs felt like heavy foreign objects dangling from my bruised torso. Chico wound the rope tightly around my arms and legs, securing me to the chair. He grabbed a dish towel from the hook near the kitchen door and used it as a gag. I heard the sound of liquid splashing on the bathroom floor. That pig, I thought, is pissing on my bathroom floor. Then I saw the red gasoline can in his hand, as he trailed the liquid in a line from the bathroom toward the front door.

My eyes were stretched totally open. I struggled to make some noise, some contact with these beasts. Stanley just smiled that same menacing smile and said, "We can't leave any witnesses, you know. Thanks for everything," he added sarcastically. Chico and Geronimo were already in the driveway,

as he struck the match, set it in the trail of gasoline, and shut the door.

My mind raced as quickly as the stream of flame approaching me. I heard the Chevette's engine cough and sputter into motion. With all the force I could muster I strained to get free of the rope, to no avail. Thick choking smoke clawed at my lungs. My eyes leaked tears and my nose streamed with mucous.

I must have passed out, because the next thing I realized, the paramedics had me on a stretcher and were running it down the driveway toward the ambulance. I didn't have the energy to even open my eyes. My first thought was, I can't believe I didn't die! I survived! I'm really breathing in air! A temporary sense of euphoria competed with the oxygen to rush into my body.

It didn't last. In the ambulance, the pain started to flood in. My brain screamed as the nerve endings in my legs registered the burned flesh. My lungs felt as though a giant bear had clawed them with his paw. I sank back into unconsciousness, although I could hear the paramedic calling to me, "Honey, hang on, we're going to get you to the hospital as fast as we can." His voice sounded as though it was coming from the end of a long tunnel.

When I woke up, the clock on the wall said it was 2:15. My mouth was taped to a respirator that pushed air in and sucked air out of my lungs. I figured out I was in intensive care because of all the tubes and things hooked up to my body.

Two months later and I confirmed that my periods had been absent for the worst of all possible reasons: I was pregnant. Just the thought that those sperm had somehow managed to stay alive in my body long enough to fertilize one of my eggs made me sick. I wasn't sure if it was the smell of the kerosene that seemed to instantly pervade the room or morning sickness that fueled my wave of nausea. I felt trapped in my body, held prisoner in a cell with a monster I had unwillingly helped to create.

I was twenty-two years old. There were no laws making abortions legal or affordable. I didn't have any clue where to turn for help. I was too ashamed to tell anyone about my predicament. There were no rape hotlines in

So now, George Bush has just vetoed federal funds for abortions, even in the case of rape or incest...I still can't smell kerosene without remembering. And I can't believe someone would force me to carry that child.

those days. My friends knew that I had been robbed. They even knew that the robbers had set my house on fire. But no one knew about the rape.

I lost my job. I was afraid to leave the house, because someone would see me and know what they had done to me. I had no money to pay for an abortion. They cost about five hundred dollars then. I willed that baby to die. I didn't do anything all day long but think about the horrible thing inside me shriveling up and dying. And after three more weeks, the miracle happened: I had a miscarriage.

They never caught the men or recovered any of my belongings. Everything in my little cottage was destroyed, either by the fire or the water or the smoke. All that was left intact was my anger, but I kept that hidden away, because I was so scared the men would know and come back to find me.

So now, George Bush has just vetoed federal funds for abortions, even in the case of rape or incest. It's a hot smoggy day in Los Angeles, another Santa Ana condition. I still can't sleep with the windows open. Sometimes my picture appears alongside my work and I worry that one of those men will see it. I still can't smell kerosene without remembering. And I can't believe someone would force me to carry that child.

Ayofemi Folayan is a Black lesbian writer and activist living in the Los Angeles area.



Mobilization for Women's Lives, Nov. 12

Abortion

Continued from page 1

ments in light of "privacy." "If we want anti-gay sodomy decisions like *Hardwick* overturned," said McFeeley, "the right to privacy must be upheld across the board."

Urvashi Vaid, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, who was eventually added to the list of speakers, suggested that privacy would be "institutionalized" if pro-choice heterosexuals supported lesbians and gay men.

"Stand with the gay and lesbian freedom movement," said Vaid. "If you are our allies, let us move beyond the static '80s policy of coalition into a dynamic '90s politic of being true partners for social

change."

Vaid emphasized that it was fitting for a lesbian to speak at the rally because lesbians "have worked hard and moved the pro-choice agenda forward at every level.... It is past time for you, our non-gay friends to commit the same support to our urgent struggle for justice and equality.

"Our presence," she said, "linked in arms with you...is a signal of a new relationship between movements for freedom in a new era of political cooperation and interaction." □

Tracey Conaty contributed to this article.

St. John

Continued from page 1

native to the party machine. In addition, gay activists were angry with Scott for his failure to support lesbian and gay rights legislation that came before the council two years ago. (Scott was the lone abstention in a 12-2-1 vote against the measure.)

St. John's candidacy and victory in Ward 2 represents a breakthrough for progressive political activists in Albany who until this election have focused their activities in the only solidly progressive area, Ward 6. Sheila Healy, president of the city's lesbian and gay Eleanor Roosevelt Democratic Club, said St. John's victory, along with the victories of two other progressive candidates, will change the nature of city politics that have been dominated by entrenched machine politicians for so long.

St. John said he hopes he and the other progressive candidates elected can "make the machine less of a machine." He said he expects there to be a greater degree of public debate about legislation and policy, instead of decision-making and deal-cutting behind the scenes. Although conservative Democrats still dominate the council, Reaugh said he expects there will be more support for gay rights legislation when it is reintroduced because the party politicians realize the growing clout of gay and progressive activism.

St. John, 32, was raised in White Plains, N.Y. He moved to Albany four years ago after what he described as "ten years as a professional student." Although he said he is currently dedicating himself to the job that lies before him, St. John also said that he was interested in holding a job in the state legislature at some point.

Reaugh said he and St. John will be in touch with other lesbian and gay representatives, most immediately at the upcoming national meeting of lesbian and gay elected officials.

St. John said he was glad to have "achieved the distinction" of being the first openly-gay Black elected official, and that he hopes his victory "will send a message to any and everyone else who feels discriminated against or of a minority persuasion. I would encourage them to speak out and do what they believe in."

□ filed from Boston

Puerto Rico

Continued from page 3

men believe that abortion should remain an option and a woman's personal decision," Dr. Mary Rivera, president of the pro-choice coalition, told the crowd. A speaker from the Puerto Rican Organization of

Working Women placed the issue of abortion rights within the context of the broader struggle for justice and reproductive rights, recalling the massive sterilization campaigns directed at Puerto Rican women and their use as guinea pigs for testing oral contraceptives in the 1950s.

Feminist representatives from Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and the United States addressed the gathering to express their solidarity with Puerto Rican pro-choice activists. Feministas en Marcha, a local media watchdog organization, and the Gay Consciousness Collective were two of the groups that answered a roll call of abortion rights supporters.

The rally was called by the Pro-Choice Coalition, an abortion rights umbrella organization, which includes Citizens Pro-Right to Abortion, Accion Pro Derecho a Escoger (APDAE), Taller Salud (Feminist Health Workshop), local clinics, and members of the Puerto Rican Bar Association. Organizers said they hoped the rally would send a message to senators who sit on the Puerto Rican Senate's Justice and Health Committee, which began public hearings on restricting abortions after the U.S. Supreme Court's *Webster* decision. Committee chair Edgardo Rosario Burgos has expressed his intention to limit abortion to cases where the mother's life is endangered.

Abortion is legal in Puerto Rico for therapeutic purposes only, after a woman has consulted with her doctor. But because of the broad definition of "emotional health," the current law has not restricted access to abortion. Unlike in the United States where the degree of allowable government intervention varies according to trimester, Puerto Rican law is uniform for the length of the pregnancy. In addition, the law does not make any special provisions for minors.

While an anti-abortion presence has always existed in Puerto Rico, the *Webster* decision and reports of Operation Rescue tactics in the U.S. have inspired the small but vocal anti-choice movement on the island and led to greater militancy on their part, including the blockading of clinics and visibility actions in front of the governor's mansion.

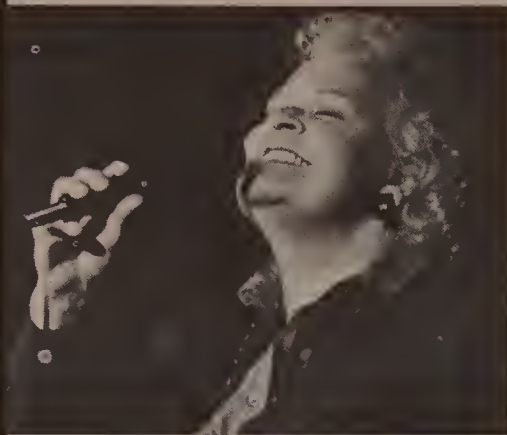
However, the pro-choice movement is also gaining momentum. In August, Taller Salud convened a national meeting of pro-choice activists where strategies for combatting the anti-choice onslaught were mapped out, and pro-choice graffiti and literature have become common sights in the metropolitan area. And in a very exciting move on Nov. 10, the First Congress on Puerto Rican Women and Health adopted a pro-choice resolution by a 2-1 margin. □

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INS detains Asian lesbian en route to retreat

By Sharmeen Islam

MINNEAPOLIS — An Asian woman en route to the Asian Pacifica Lesbian Network (APLN) retreat was detained and harassed here as she was entering the United States.

The woman, who chooses to remain anonymous for now, is a native of the Netherlands. She was entering the country as a tourist when she was arbitrarily pulled out of a visa line by Immigration and Naturalization Service officials and asked if she were a prostitute.

Upon finding that there was nothing wrong with the woman's papers, the INS officials searched her possessions. They found her journal and proceeded to have it translated from Dutch to English. In so doing, the officials discovered that she was coming to the U.S. to attend the APLN retreat.

At this point, without further discussion, the INS officials gave her the option of being imprisoned in Minneapolis for two weeks or being deported. Although the Asian sister chose to go back, several lawyers, including some from the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as friends have been fighting against this case of homophobia and racism within the U.S.

Using the McClarren Act, the INS can arbitrarily refuse entry or visas to lesbians and gay men entering or emigrating to the U.S. In March, Dutch PWA Hans Paul Verhoef, who was on his way to the National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference in San Francisco was detained in Minneapolis by the INS. And, another Asian gay man passing through the airport here on his way to a conference on AIDS in Canada was reportedly detained recently. □



Celebrating the Asian Pacifica Lesbian Network's first retreat, Sept. 1-4

'Coming together, moving forward'

An Asian lesbian reports back from the first national retreat sponsored by the Asian Pacifica Lesbian Network

By Sharmeen Islam and Sarah Devi

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — Over 180 Asian lesbians from all parts of the U.S., Canada, England and the Netherlands gate at the first national retreat sponsored by the Asian Pacifica Lesbian Network. "Coming Together, Moving Forward" was held Sept. 1-4.

The heritages represented at this herstorical event included South Asia, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Pacific Islands, and mixed. Women from as far west as Pakistan to as east as Japan came to Santa Cruz to meet other sisters.

The conference began with a morning flower ritual, spoken in nine native languages. In order to validate our presence on the Native American sacred burial grounds, the Asian lesbians asked for permission from the spirits of the Native American women buried under the UC Santa Cruz campus to hold the retreat. Not a word of English was spoken during this ceremony which touched the hearts of each attendee and set the tone for the retreat.

The pioneering retreat was marked by extraordinary diversity including Asian-American women, immigrant Asian

women, women of mixed heritage, bisexual women, lesbians, women with disabilities, artists, farmers, martial arts teachers, adoptees, women in recovery, and lesbian mothers. As we came together, we realized how different we are and yet we discovered our common threads as we travelled thousands of miles to break our isolation in each others' arms.

Workshops included Dynamics of Cross Racial Hostility, Mixed Race Issues, Identity as Asian Pacific Lesbian Adoptees, Safer Sex, Sexuality/Sensuality in Our Cultures, Bisexual Pride, Recovery, Interracial Relationships, Legal and Civil Rights, and Ways of Documenting Ourselves. There were also slide shows and photographic exhibits about our lives, readings by published writers and performances from artists.

At the end of the conference, the attendees drew up the charter and vision for this newly formed national organization. A new leadership emerged and was welcomed by the existing organizers of the community. In closing, the women were one in peace, solidarity, and harmony. □

Center

Continued from page 3

and the signing of the gay rights bill on the same day is really wonderful."

The first PWA speaker, J.R. McEvoy — who serves on the boards of AAC and the National Associate of People with AIDS — set forth the changing agenda ahead. "Between life and death there is much to do. AIDS is a cultural crisis for those who survive.... The Center's program is what we make of it; in time its focus will change, as the disease changes." McEvoy stressed the need for unity with other people with disabilities and emphasized the Center's commitment to work with the Massachusetts Coalition of People with Disabilities.

Bill Bender, a member of the Boston PWA Coalition, spoke of "a vision that has finally come true.... AIDS is not about dying, it is about living." Bender did not comment of the PWA Coalition's planned upcoming protest for housing rights or on the controversy surrounding changes within the group to be discussed at a meeting this week. (Many activists have urged the PWA group to use the Living Center's opening as an opportunity to disengage more completely from AAC and become a fully separate entity with a stronger political voice).

Many guests agreed that the most eloquent speaker was John Winsky, director of the Massachusetts Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. "I'm coming here to lend a welcoming hand from the 36 million other Americans with disabilities," he said, urging people with AIDS to "coalesce, join together.... We have a lot of common causes." Winsky stressed "living life with dignity" and the importance of obtaining needed benefits and services.

AAC Executive Director Larry Kessler,

who serves on the Presidential AIDS Commission, discussed the semantic and semiotic transition that has occurred over the course of a decade. He traced the evolution from "AIDS victim" to "AIDS patient" to "person with AIDS" to "person living with AIDS," describing AIDS as a "prism" through which "we see what is wrong with the health care system," as well as the "prejudice and homophobia around us."

Taking a militant tone regarding the state's budget squeeze — even as he avoided any criticism of the medical establishment on research/treatment issues — Kessler encouraged those concerned to "continue to press on these issues" over the next few months. Kessler attacked the priorities of a state legislature that wrote off \$45 million in revenues but eliminated benefits for undocumented aliens — many of whom have AIDS. "It's not our job to take over public health," the AAC director said, calling for "fair taxes" to deal with an epidemic he characterized as "a disease, not a disgrace," one that is "chronic, but not fatal."

Afterwards, the Living Center's Stephan Cohen expressed pleasure that normally demure speakers such as Kessler had spoke so strongly in favor of PWA empowerment, and voiced his desire for the Center to be inclusive. "We see ourselves as being open to groups like 'Positive Directions' (a group for healthy HIV-seropositives in Boston) and the PWA Coalition." □

Gay rights bill

Continued from page 3

those people in the community to come out who have been until this time disenfranchised. "It's protecting the disadvantaged, the ones who can't used their economic influ-

ence to guarantee that they get protection."

Isaacson brought cheerful chanting from ACT UP members, when she stated, "This bill belongs to everyone, to our brothers and sisters who have lost their lives to AIDS." ACT UP members — who had told *GCN* that they planned to interrupt the signing if gay speakers did not comply with ACT UP's demand that they mention AIDS — responded with "Just say AIDS! Just say AIDS!" Signs held by members of ACT UP/Boston commanded attention in the small Nurse's Hall entryway of the Massachusetts State House, with messages of "Gay Rights Don't Cure the Ill" and "Gay Rights Don't Raise the Dead," and "The Government Has Blood on its Hands."

Caucus member Tierney, who is also a member of the Board of the AIDS Action Committee, elaborated further. "[Our work] is dedicated to the thousands of our brothers who [have] died in the epidemic of AIDS," Tierney said. "Men, women, and children [who are] HIV-positive, we promise to use our new-found political strength [and our learned lessons] to make sure the government does what it is supposed to do: research and education."

Tierney reminded those gathered of the work to be done to better adequate health care, to legislate domestic partner rights, and to ensure gay men and lesbians have the freedom to choose their families.

Lesbian and gay community celebrations include a "community signing" organized by the Caucus and Mayor Flynn's liaison, Ann Sanders, on Nov. 18 at Faneuil Hall, followed by a dance at the Opera House the same night, sponsored by the Caucus and a Grass Roots Gay Rights Fund Fundraiser dance party. Another celebration is planned by the Coalition for early December. □

'Don't wait until the next eulogy'

Gregory L. Broyles exhorts Black clergy to respond to AIDS

The following speech was originally given on October 10, 1989 at a conference sponsored by the Black Leadership Commission on AIDS entitled "The Black Church Responds to AIDS in the Black Community."

My name is Gregory Broyles and I work for the Gay Men's Health Crisis. Before coming to GMHC I was the Assistant Director of the Minority Task Force on AIDS, and as such I provided direct service to people with AIDS. The Minority Task Force on AIDS is located in central Harlem and at the time it was the sole service agency in the area devoted to providing AIDS services to the African American community. The Minority Task Force on AIDS was isolated in many ways; it had very little support from within the community and even less from other communities and governmental agencies. Existing social service agencies in African American communities then and now are overwhelmed by all the social ills that already exist. This new and frightening and sometimes fatal disease was and is still met with trepidation.

Today I'd like to discuss the need for support, the positive effects nurturing has on the healing process, and how the vast human resources within our religious institutions can better serve the needs of those challenged by HIV/AIDS within African American communities. And how we all should look beyond our differences and assist our African American brothers who are gay and HIV-infected.

Outside my network of friends, I had to hide the gay part of my life. In my church I was now a sinner. I internalized my feelings. Over time, guilt and shame developed.

Let me begin by giving a personal anecdote because I don't think my path is terribly different from many of my African American brothers who are gay. My family are members of the Church of Christ in Detroit, Michigan; faithful, dedicated, and very active. As a youth I was encouraged to participate in the youth fellowship and it was there that my leadership skills were developed. The church was where my family's values were reinforced. Our church was dominated by hardworking middle class African Americans. The majority of the young people attended college after graduation from high school.

We had many role models. The minister of our church was a Ph.D. candidate at the time. His sermons were always mentally stimulating, connecting the text of the Bible with current events. We all called him Brother Locke. His smile was warm and very comforting. He was a motivator. Through his leadership we built a new church and he challenged our moral obligations. The time of my youth was during the Sixties. There was social unrest and a new awakening in the African American Community. The civil rights movement was in full swing. It was during those exciting times that our church bought a large abandoned house in the inner city of Detroit. The house was called "The House of Carpenters." It is said that Christ was a carpenter. The mission of the "House of Carpenters" was to help the needy and the underprivileged with shelter, food, pre-school, day care. The concept was initiated by our church and because of our outreach efforts other churches got involved throughout the Detroit area. Everyone involved volunteered their time. For me, as a teenager actively participating, the experience left a lasting impression. We were practicing what was being preached.

We were attempting to follow Christ's example: Christ came as a servant of the people and stayed where people needed Him.

I was entering senior high school and instead of pursuing relationships with girls I found myself increasingly attracted to boys. My attraction was beyond friendship; I wanted more. However, I was unclear as to what to do with my feelings. This wasn't something that was taught at home, in school or in the church. I was frightened and felt very much alone. I wanted to tell someone. Brother Locke was a family friend as well as our minister and we discussed many things, but this was a secret I couldn't share. What if he told my folks?

Initially I fought my desire. However, the more I resisted, the more compelling I felt my need to express my feelings. Fortunately in school I met others who had similar feelings and desires. We developed a support network that was essential to our survival. The church no longer served my needs; I then went *only* at the urging of my parents. Outside my network of friends I had to hide that part of my life. In my church I was *now* a sinner. I internalized my feelings. *Over time*, guilt and shame developed. As long as no one outside my circle of friends knew of my sexual preference, I was okay. The double life style I adopted affected my self-esteem. It was then that I became secretive and isolating.

The church was a safe place, a shelter from most of the negative elements of our world. But for the gay man there was/is no support if he defies the traditional teachings of the church. The church is an institution with wondrous potential. The work produced for the good of the community, particularly in the African American community, is phenomenal.

Even though the gay lifestyle is not embraced by the church, you will find that many of our African American brothers who are gay are active and dedicated members of the church. Gay men are quietly tolerated as long as the church is not challenged to confront the sexual preference issue.

I can recall the process leading to my involvement in this movement. I received a call during the Christmas Season. The year was 1986, a mere three years ago. It was an ex-lover calling from his hospital bed. He began by asking how I was doing and, then, went on to inform me that he had pneumonia. His next words were "It's AIDS-related." I was numb. My visit to my friend's hospital bed was my first step in an on-going self-education process. My ex-lover's life was now being challenged by a virus. Though I had shared special moments with this man, I was afraid to touch him. I didn't want to be afraid, but I was. Leaving the hospital, I felt many emotions: love, hate, guilt, fear and most of all a need to have answers to the many questions that clouded my mind.

I decided the way to answer the questions I had was to become involved. In January, 1987, I participated in the Minority Task Force on AIDS' Buddy Training Program. And from that point on, my involvement escalated. In spite of my fears, I felt that I must participate, as actively as possible. After I completed training, I was assigned to work with my first person with AIDS (PWA) in February. His condition worsened quickly and long before his biological death, came his emotional death. Once he lost his will to live, death followed. I felt angry. How could this happen? What must be done, and more importantly, how could I make a difference?

HIV/AIDS can not be addressed without confronting the sexuality and substance use issues. African Americans represent 25 percent of New York's City's population and yet 30 percent of all reported diagnosed AIDS cases. Eighty-four percent of all women diagnosed with AIDS are within communities of color and 91 percent of the children diagnosed with AIDS are from communities of color. HIV/AIDS is an emotional issue to everyone, but more spe-



Gregory L. Broyles

cifically for communities of color. We African American men who are gay are an invisible population within the community. Yet, we represent a disproportionate percentage of those affected by this epidemic. As of August 30, 1989 in New York City, 20 percent or 2,111 of all diagnosed AIDS cases are among African American men who are homosexual or bisexual. I am not suggesting that the church embrace the gay lifestyle; however, I strongly believe that the religious institutions in our communities have an obligation to *all* the citizens in its community.

I have seen the African American community address the issue of HIV/AIDS. However, the focus has been on women, children and babies. It seems safe and you don't have to deal with drug use or sexuality issues. But there are no safe areas in this epidemic, and it's just as terrible that IV drug users and African American gay men are infected.

The transmission of HIV/AIDS within the African American community has affected the whole of our community. In order to stem the epidemic we must first acknowledge that the problem exists. There are those in our community who *are* forging this battle, but it's going to take everyone to roll up their sleeves and get involved. The churches are in communities where the problem exists. Your leadership is imperative.

I have seen the African American Community address the issue of HIV/AIDS. However, the focus has been on women, children and babies. It's safe and you don't have to deal with drug use or the sexuality issues. There are no safe areas when dealing with the HIV/AIDS epidemic. It is terrible that women, children and babies are infected. But it's just as terrible that the IV drug user and the African American men who are gay are infected. Treating a part of the problem and not the whole will not make it go away. HIV knows no boundaries. It has the potential to annihilate the African American community.

Sure it's challenging and frustrating. I know the frustration firsthand. Working in the community trying to provide for the needs of our people who are infected is heartbreaking. With limited resources, there were times when all I could offer was my em-

brace, time and tears. The agencies formed to address the needs of those in our community who are infected are not getting the private dollars to build facilities and hire the professionals needed to adequately address the many issues. Our agencies depend solely on the limited funding from the government.

I have seen what the church can do when it believes in something. I have seen the people come together and give support. I know the power of our church leaders when asking for a special offering for a cause. There is no more special cause than a human life. Regardless of how that person chooses to live his life he deserves your support. He is some mother's child who may be a member of your church.

Don't wait for the next eulogy that you have to give. Start *Now*! Your congregations know the problem, everyone in the African American community has been touched in some way by this epidemic. If nothing else, support the loved ones left behind to endure the pain of losing their loved ones. They are waiting to hear from you. Just remember, *no one* is expendable.

Postscript: Though I was initially apprehensive, my speech was well received by the Black clergy who attended the conference. Many within the audience, both men and women, came to me afterwards and expressed their gratitude. They told me how brave they thought it was for me to tell my story.

The participants felt safe enough to really *talk* about homosexuality, some of them for the first time. Clergy members were able to process their feelings regarding homosexuality as a sin, and move on to talking about how the church could support HIV-infected people. Programs were suggested, such as providing dinners where HIV-infected people could come to be together and get support.

I do believe we made history that afternoon. I am encouraged by the experience and feel a need to continue to tell our story. □

Gregory L. Broyles is a policy associate with the Gay Men's Health Crisis. His work includes building coalitions with AIDS service providers in New York; lobbying elected officials for AIDS funding for community-based organizations; developing policy statements for GMHC and organizing forums to educate the public.

Weaving the future of Black gender politics

Craig G. Harris sets a feminist agenda for Black Gay men

ast weekend I took advantage of a blue moon free afternoon and headed to the Mart on 125th Street looking for some much-needed household decorations. I bought three prints: a Horace Pippin, a Romare Bearden, and a Paul Goodnight. When I returned home, I noticed that I had selected graphics dominated by formidable, beautiful Black women. I chose to hang the largest, which is my favorite, at the focal point of my living room. It is the 1987 Goodnight entitled "Links and Lineage."

The painting depicts a mother cornrowing her young daughter's hair. The daughter, in turn, is combing out the gray strands of her grandmother who is crafting an intricate quilt. The scene reminds of Alice Walker's observation:

...in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., there hangs a quilt unlike any other in the world. In fanciful, inspired, and yet simple and identifiable figures, it portrays the story of the Crucifixion. It is considered rare, beyond price. Though it follows no known pattern of quilt-making, and though it is made of bits and pieces of worthless rags, it is obviously the work of a person of powerful imagination and deep spiritual feeling. Below the quilt I saw a note that says it was made by an "anonymous" Black woman in Alabama, a hundred years ago.¹

For too long, Black women, as a class, have been forced to create from remnants — weaving the fabrics of their lives into priceless works of art while suffering conditions tantamount to crucifixion at the hands of the State.

Many Black Gay men are guilty of repeated conscious and unconscious injustices against Black women in general, and their Lesbian sisters in particular. Black Gay men's discomfort with self-identification of their sexuality and subsequent isolation have further led to misunderstanding and fear, rather than hatred, of Black Lesbians.

Black women have also suffered and continue to suffer at the hands of their ostensibly progressive brothers. Margaret Sloan-Hunter, a founding editor of *Ms.* magazine, articulated such oppression quite eloquently in her keynote address to the National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference in Los Angeles on February 14, 1988. Describing her involvement in the Black Power Movement, Sloan-Hunter recalled that when working with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the role of women was one of "making lemonade, taking care of the children, and giving up a lot of pussy."² She continued with a story about asking Stokeley Carmichael about the position of Black women in the movement. His response: "Prone."³

Consistent with the beliefs and behaviors of many Black men, Carmichael probably thought his response was cool. I doubt that he realized the relationship between the oppression he encountered from the larger society as a Black man, and the subjugation of Black women by leaders of the Movement and Black men in general. I doubt he was aware of the psychosocial stressors that propelled his flippancy.

Psychologist Richard Majors describes

this phenomenon among Black men as follows:

Being cool is a unique response to adverse social, political and economic conditions. Cool provides control, inner strength, stability and confidence. Being cool, illustrated in its various poses and postures, becomes a very powerful and necessary tool in the Black man's constant fight for his soul.... Cool Pose, however, is not without its price. Many Black males fail to discriminate the appropriate uses of Cool Pose and act cool much of the time, without regard to time or space.... Perhaps Black men have become so conditioned to keeping up their guard against oppression from the dominant white society that this particular attitude and behavior represents for them the best safeguard against further mental or physical abuse. However, this same behavior makes it difficult for these males to let their guard down and show affection, even for people they actually care about or for people that may really care about them (e.g., girlfriends, wives, mothers, fathers, "good" friends, etc.).⁴

Majors goes on to say:

Cool Pose represents a fundamental structuring of the psyche of the Black male and is manifested in some way or another in the daily activities and recreational habits of most Black males. There are few other social or psychological constructs that have shaped, directed or controlled the Black male to the extent that the various forms of coolness have. It is surprising, then, that for a concept that has the potential to explain problems in Black male and Black female relationships, Black-on-Black crime, and Black-on-Black pregnancies, there is such limited research on the subject.⁵

Majors demonstrates keen insights into the psyche of Black (heterosexual) males and its manifestations of aggressive, self-destructive behaviors that threaten the cohesiveness of the Black community as a whole. He fails, however, to investigate the impact of the variable of sexual orientation/affective preference on intra-racial community-building.

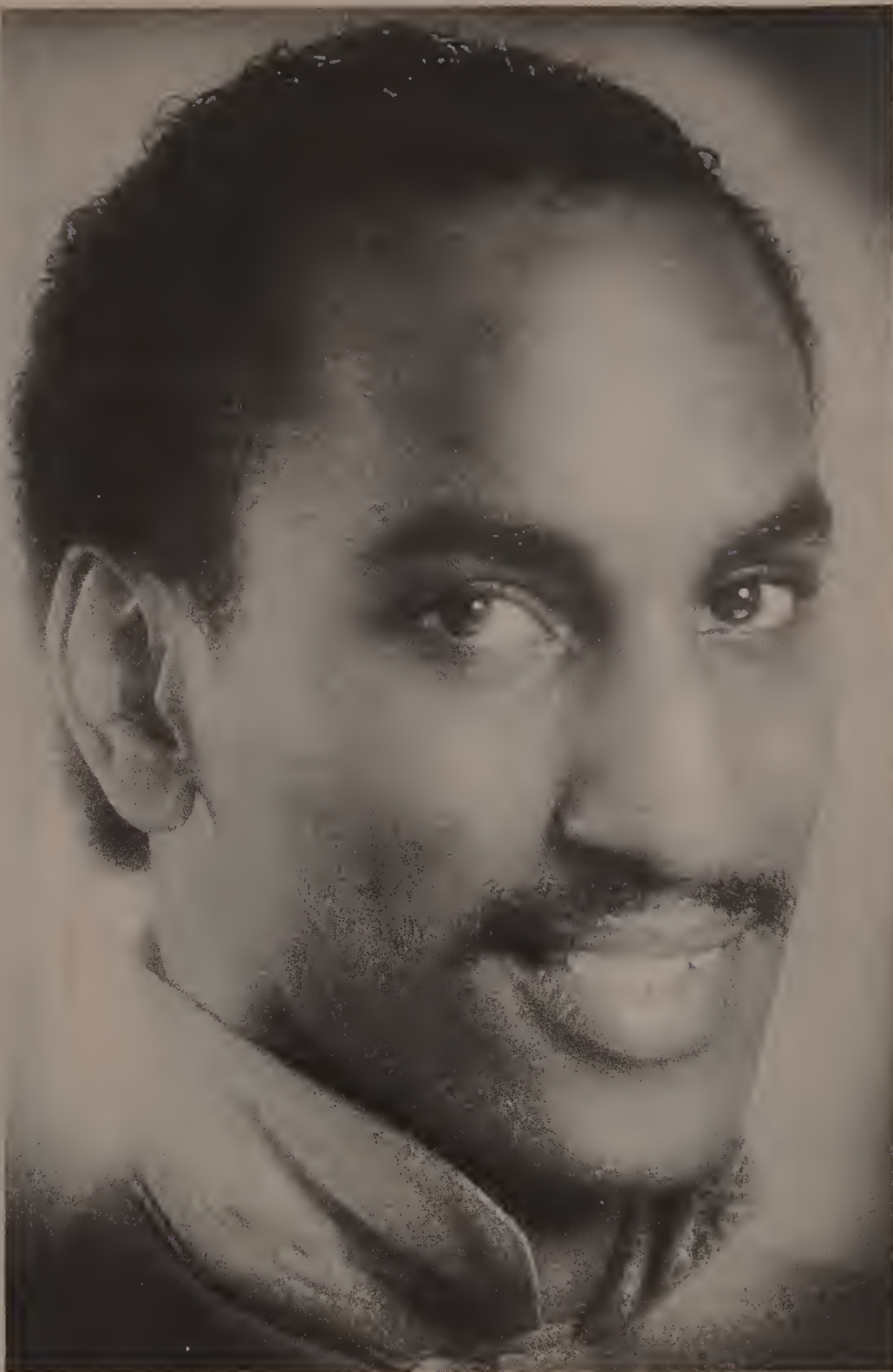
Added to the cruelties of a racist and sexist society, homophobia has relegated Black Lesbians to a status of voluntary or involuntary outsiders — either not known to, or kept apart from her brothers and heterosexual sisters.

Audre Lorde provides personal examples of this in a speech she delivered at the Women's Center of Medgar Evers College:

When I weaned my daughter in 1963 to go to Washington in August to work in the coffee tents along with Lena Horne, making coffee for the marshalls because that's what most Black women did in the 1963 March on Washington, I was a Black Lesbian.... When I picketed for Welfare Mothers' Rights, and against the enforced sterilization of young Black girls, when I fought institutionalized racism in the New York City Schools, I was a Black Lesbian. But you did not know it because we did not identify ourselves, so now you can say that Black Lesbians and Gay men have nothing to do with the struggles of the Black Nation.⁶

Lorde describes the fear provoked by Black Lesbians, saying:

The terror of Black Lesbians is buried in that deep inner place where we have been taught to fear all difference — to kill it or ignore it...the one accusation that seems to render even the most vocal straight Black woman totally silent and ineffective is the suggestion that she might be a Black Lesbian ...



Craig G. Harris

let anyone, particularly a Black man, accuse a straight Black woman of being a Black Lesbian, and right away that sister becomes immobilized, as if that is the most horrible thing she could be, and must at all costs be proven false.⁷

Within the Lesbian/Gay community, women have not been spared the affront of misogyny. According to John Nierenberg:

Gay misogyny is consistently reinforced by confused self-images that result in insecurity and self-abuse.

The Black Lesbian community is far more advanced than the Black Gay male community along the process of creating institutions and building coalitions. Black Gay men are only beginning the process of coming together to combat the oppression we face as Blacks and as Gays. While our autonomous organizing is essential, we must be mindful of the issues of Black women, particularly Black Lesbians.

The gay male...has a variety of motivations for his misogyny: to reassure himself and others of his "masculinity"; to reassure *other gay* and straight misogynists of his alliance with Men....⁸

Comparing Majors' theory of Black men and the "Cool Pose" with Nierenberg's reasoning for Gay misogyny, we are not surprised to find that many Black Gay men are guilty of repeated conscious and uncon-

scious injustices against Black women in general, and their Lesbian sisters in particular. Black Gay men's discomfort with self-identification of their sexuality and subsequent isolation have further led to misunderstanding and fear, rather than hatred, of Black lesbians.

It cannot go unrecognized that the Black Lesbian community is far more advanced than the Black Gay male community along the process of creating institutions and building coalitions. This Black Lesbian organizing is rooted in the traditions of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs founded in 1896, the Women's Suffrage Movement, and the Women's Liberation/Feminist Movement. Black Gay men, on the other hand, are only beginning the process of coming together to combat the oppression we face as Blacks and as Gays. While our autonomous organizing is an essential element of the growth process of the Black Gay male community, we must be mindful of the issues of Black women, particularly Black Lesbians, and must incorporate these issues into our agendas.

Black Gay men must also work in coalition with Black Lesbians to learn from each other, and in order to tackle the bias we encounter from our heterosexual sisters and brothers, and the many difficult problems facing the overall Black community. In the words of Barbara Smith:

Blackness is an inestimable bond.... Even as a baby I suffered the result of racial oppression and I had to learn to cope with it long before I had any inkling of what it might mean to be a woman or a Lesbian. This does not mean that racism is more important than other oppressions. But as I've often stated, it is the most pervasive and dangerous oppression in *my* life.

My perceptions about race are not something that I have to explain to activist Black Gay men, nor do I need to delineate the challenge of being queer in the Black community. I also don't have to explain the talk I talk, why I cannot get into white women's music, why I do not call Black persons past a certain age by their first names, or why I am so worried about our youth. It's all understood. We share language, culture, values, the African genius, family ties — in short, we

Continued on page 11

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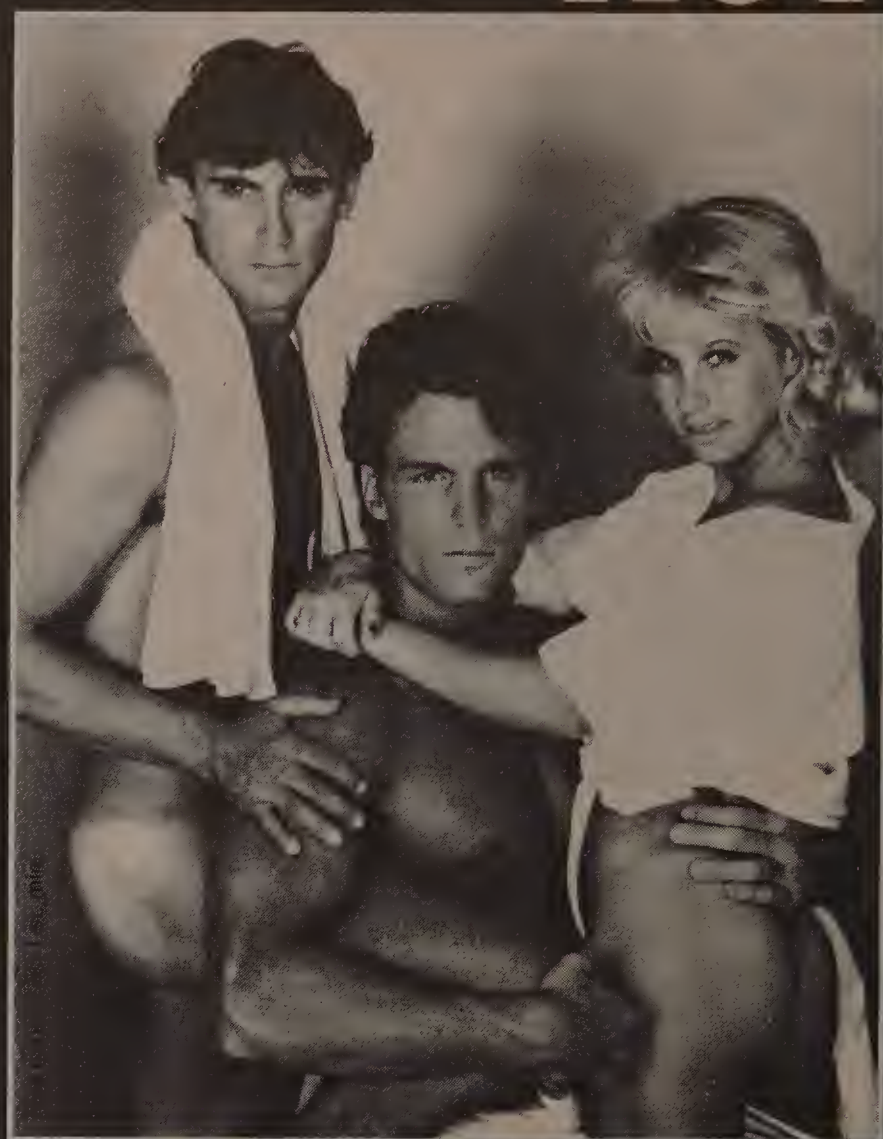
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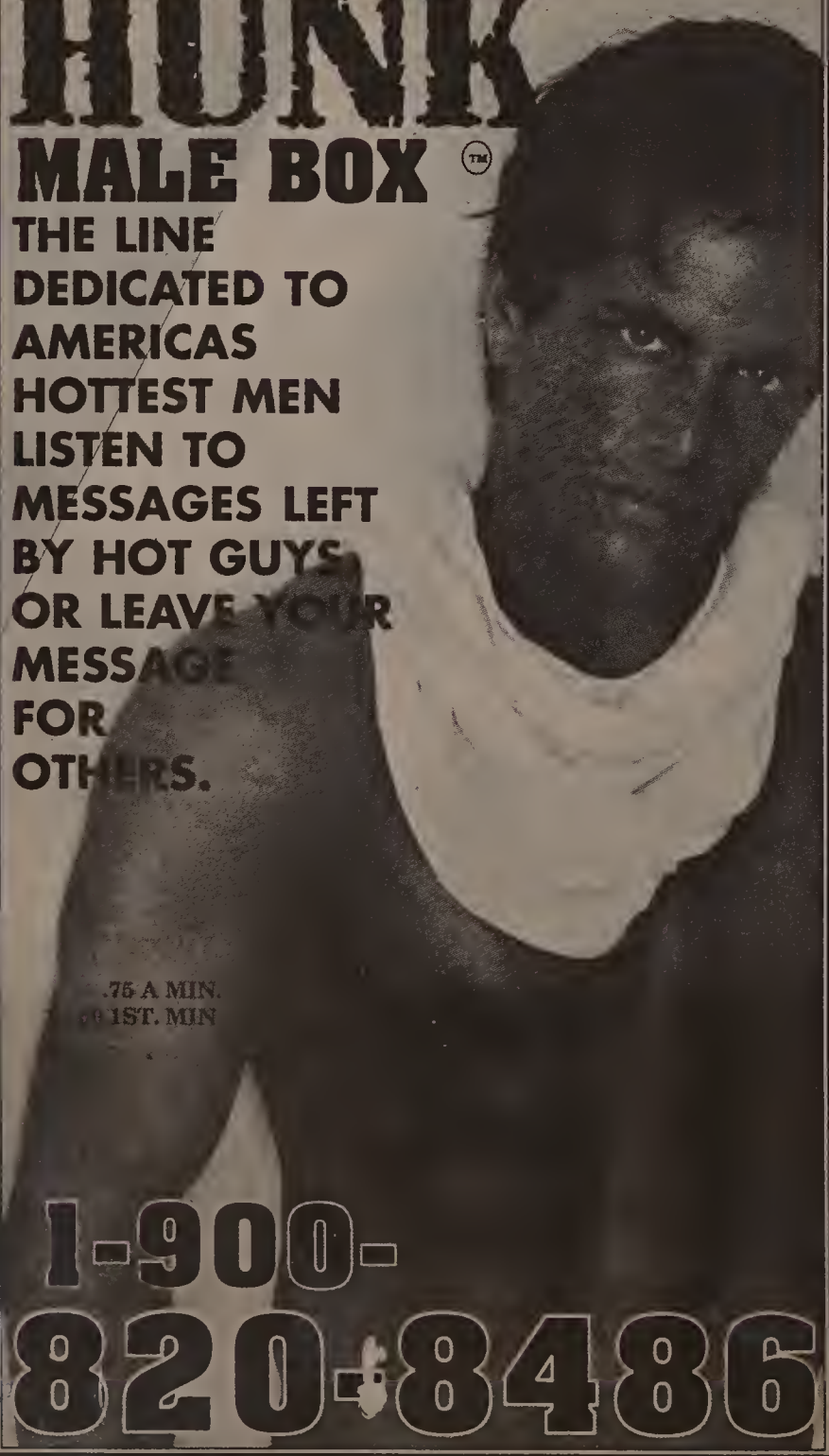
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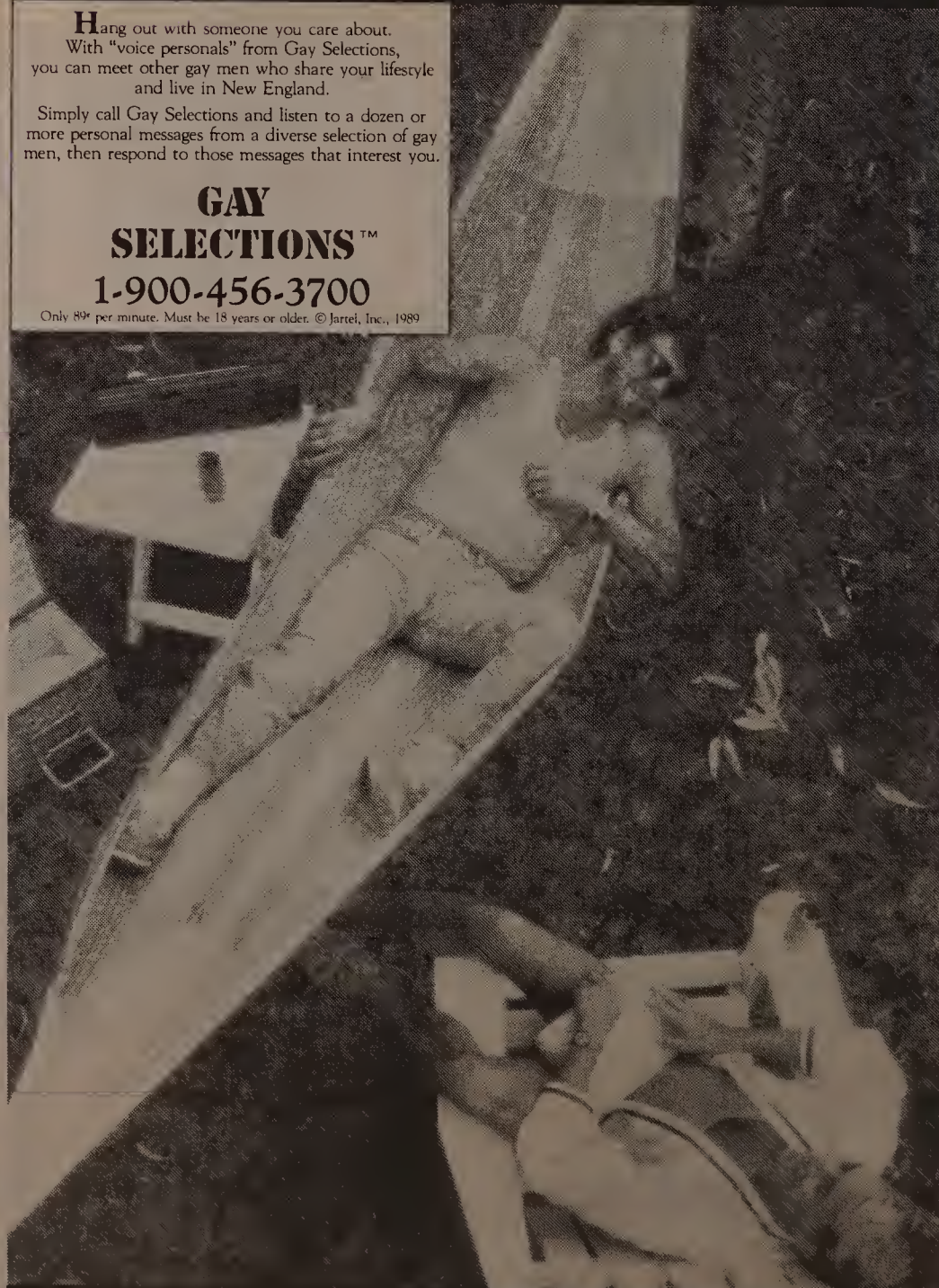
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Dykes to watch out for



Gender Politics

Continued from centerspread

share Blackness.⁹

Smith is not naive enough to believe that the bond of ethnicity will cause her associations with all Black Gay men to be characterized by mutual respect and cooperation. Rather, she acknowledges the growing number of pro-feminist Black Gay men:

Of course, I am blessed to be in contact with highly progressive and aware Black Gay men who have chosen to define their situation politically and not merely as a lifestyle. I am not saying that our differences never cause problems or that sexism never enters in, but I've observed a great deal of willingness to grapple with these issues. If there's one thing that most impresses me about our interactions, it is how much kindness there is between us. Perhaps because sexual and romantic agendas are suspended, we can all just relax and treat each other like folks. I often imagine what our heterosexual sisters and brothers might think if they could see us, supposed man- and woman-haters, steadily working for our liberation and having a damned good time in the process.¹⁰

More Black men need to possess the sensitivity and political insights Smith depicts. More Black Gay men must come to the realization that their oppression is inextricably linked to the oppression of a wide range of disenfranchised peoples, but most importantly, that of Black Lesbians and Black heterosexual women.

It is essential that Black Gay men become visible in the Anti-Rape movement with the understanding that what motivates sexual violence against Black women motivates incidents of fag bashing. It is important for Black Gay men to support the Equal Rights Amendment with the realization that a capitalist system which denies parity of workers' compensation on the basis of gender, is the same system which disburses unequal pay on the basis of race, and further, will deny employment on the basis of sexual orientation/affectional preference. Black Gay men must become active in the Pro-choice Movement and see the direct correlations between a woman's right to decide not to complete the gestation process — and likewise, to be protected from forced

obstetrical interventions — and the rights of HIV-infected Black Gay men to drug therapies through clinical trials.

The more clearly we see these connections, the better equipped we will be to create a movement as powerful, and as priceless, as the quilt that hangs in the Smithsonian. As a reminder, and as inspiration, let us look to the images of three generations of Black women in "Links and Lineage" — the grandmother piecing together bits and scraps to weave a protective covering for generations to come. □

⁹Walker, Alice, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York, NY, 1984, p.239.

¹⁰Harris, Craig G., "Coming to Power," *The Advocate*, April 12, 1988, p.38.

¹Ibid.

⁴Majors, Richard, G., "Cool Pose: The Proud Signature of Black Survival," *Changing Men*, Winter 1986, p.6.

¹Ibid.

⁶Lorde, Audre, *A Burst of Light*, Firebrand Books, Ithaca, NY, 1988, p.23.

⁷Ibid. pp.21-22.

⁸Nierenberg, John R., "Misogyny: Gay and Straight," *New Men, New Minds*, ed. Franklin Abbott, The Crossing Press, Freedom, CA, 1987, p.133.

⁹Smith, Barbara, "Working for Liberation and Having a Damned Good Time," *New York Native*, March 3, 1986, p.27.

¹⁰Ibid.

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Craig G. Harris is a Black gay male feminist and writer. An earlier version of this piece appeared in the Black lesbian publication *Ache*, Vol. 1, No. 6, July 1989. *Ache* can be reached at P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706.

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ANTIGONE is a new publication that will serve as a support for prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families. They do some legal referrals, PENPAL listings, adopt-a-prisoner visiting, news and legal notes column. Write them for more info at: Antigone, Box 308, Farmington MI 48332. (Their newsletter is \$2 for a prisoner subscription; \$7 for an outsider).

Your publication has renewed my faith in the Gay Community. Thank you. I would like also to place an ad in your penpal section. I'm 26, have been in here since 17, and am looking for someone to show me what love is all about. Ed RUEGG, 108085, Box 38, 1150 SW Allapattah Rd, Indiantown FL 34956.

Need a friend? Me too! Open-minded, sincere, frisky and gay. Friendly or hot letters all answered. Please write. E.T. POTIRIADES, 48146, 2605 State St, Salem OR 97310.

Would you please help me find a penpal? I'm 29, part Cherokee Indian, and would like to write to someone for friendship. Mack HARRIS, 81669, Star Rt Box 22-B, Tucker AR 72168.

To all friends of GYPSY BEE: From East to West, she is vacationing in California so please write: Ivory WILSON, 17860-009, 3901 Klein Blvd, Lompoc CA 93436.

White gay male would like to meet any Black man that will not play games and will be a real friend. I have no one to write and would love to hear from you. I can write other prisoners too. Richard POORMAN, 97168 Dorm 3, Box 479, Burgin KY 40310.

I would really like to have a gay man to write to. I'll be happy to write back. I would like to know all about the gay life style and in doing so I think that I would be able to understand myself better. We can both ask questions and give answers. Thanks! Raymon AMBROSE, 16837, Box 250, Draper UT 84020.

Lonely but friendly and sexy transvestite. I'm 24 years of youth and beauty. If there is any handsome hungry young or older men interested in a sweet brown sugar babe, please feel to inquire. I go by the name of Antail. Roy DENNIS, 875513, 1500 W. US 40, Greencastle IN 46135.

I'm 32, enjoy the outdoors and swimming but also enjoy art, music along with reading good novels, and a good warm body to cuddle up to and share feelings and ideas with. I don't know what else to say. I hope you keep me on your GCN mailing list! Gary COMPSTON, 458165, Jester 3, Richmond TX 77469.

My frame is cuddly soft and I would truly like to find a caring person who would like to write me. I'm interested in outdoors activities, boating, biking, etc. and indoors too (making love in a hot tub, watching movies on the VCR, and making love on a full moon lit night! Troy K. EUBANKS, 490834, Rt 4 Box 1200, Rosharon TX 77583.

39 yr old GM, salt and pepper hair, college grad, looking for sincere friendship/penpal. Love to cook, travel and cuddle. Can only write free world people. Lance HIEMSTRA, 96916, KY State Reformatory, LaGrange KY 40031.

Last year I got 3 terrific penpals from my GCN ad. I'm an erotic fiction writer so I promise hot letters. I enjoy hearing from J/O exhib. Will send my photo and lots of steamy letters. Adrian LeCHANCE, 30208 Santa Rita, 10,000 S. Wilmot, Tucson AZ 85777.

Lonely Latino prisoner, 32, looking for feminine gay man to write to for a meaningful relationship. Johnny RIVERA, TX0005, 100 Warrior Lane 4-35, Bessemer AL 35023.

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I enjoy reading your newspaper a lot. I was hoping that you could put my name in your penpal ads. I'm 33 yrs young, like sports, all kinds of music, fishing, camping, chess and reading. Renee SIMS, 18795 SPHU 116, Frontera CA 91720.

I would like to have a penpal. I'm 29, love the outdoors and long walks, soft light and real soft music, and a nice bottle of wine. Let's be friends. Judy WILSON, 16435-R, 1479 Collins Ave, Marysville OH 43040.



Transvestite seeking friendship

Being incarcerated is hard on the sexuality of any incarcerated person, but it is especially hard on those of us who are feminine identified & transvestite. I'm there to act out the passive female roll with very little satisfaction for myself. I'd like to find a free world female to write just for friendship. Age is not a problem. Please write, Misty. Marshall Ray BREWER, 383021, Box 16, Lovelady TX 75851.

It really put a smile on my face when I got your first (sample) copy of GCN. It's the first mail I've got from the outside world in a year! I noticed your Prisoners Seeking Friends section and I would like to place an ad too. Lonely Bi needs a concerned soul in the free world. Age, looks & race unimportant. What's in your heart is! Rick MASON, 201-036, Box 56, Lebanon OH 45036.

Looking for new friends. Love swimming, cycling, hiking, dancing, music and nights for only 2. Write Paul POORE, EF-228237, Holly A-I, PO Box 417, Hardwick GA 31034.

Sitting in this BOX I now call 'Home'

I'm in 'segregation' and will be for quite a while. I'm having a hard time of this. Can't talk to many people in here. Your paper is the only thing I have to read. It keeps me going. Thank you. Would someone like to be writing friends? Timothy SUNDEEN, 52511, 2605 State St, Salem OR 97310.

Intelligent, soft-spoken, 29, ebony brown skin, looking for someone — anyone! who enjoys writing and sharing feelings, ideas and perceptions. I have many things to share and need a friend. Rickey BASKERVILLE, 37374-3B-13, Rt 2 Box 2222, Mineral Point MO 63660.

I go by the name Antel and I'm a Pretty brown skin tenderoni. I'm 24, and my hobbies are swimming, fashion, dancing and I'm looking for a very nice friendship. Please feel free to write. Roy DENNIS, 875513, 737 Moon Rd, Plainfield IN 46168.

Just your average Angora kitty

Loyal, quiet, intelligent, feminine appearing person, very sensitive and sentimental, enjoy rock, jazz, classical music, having my lil toes tickled, love to give and to get 'real care' and attention, would like to hear from a mature, caring man. J. Angel VARGAS, D-70236, 480 Alta Rd (F2-6-239), San Diego CA 92179.

Black male interested in all feminine males and TVs, all races, would like to hear from prisoners or free world alike. Well hung, Black and full of cum. Robert UNDERWOOD, 200428, PO Box 7450-VRU, Trenton NJ 08628.

calendar



18 Saturday □ **Toshi Reagon** performs at Club Cabaret. 8pm. 536-0972 for ticket info. Also 11/19.

Calendar listings must be received by the Monday before the week of the event. Photos encouraged. Please specify if event is/is not wheelchair accessible and/or sign language interpreted. Please use our format as a guide for listings and put each event on a separate sheet, if possible. Listings must be typed.

18 Saturday

Boston □ **Monthly Dim Sum Brunch** with the Boston Bisexual Women's Network and the Boston Bisexual Men's Network. Meet under the Chinatown Arch. 10:45am. \$6-8. BIS-MOVE for info.

Cambridge □ **Chiltern Mountain Club's** annual meeting, potluck & slide show. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 2-10pm. 288-3141.

Boston □ **Swing Dance** with "Cheek to Cheek" to benefit GLAD. At the Metropolitan Health Club, 209 Columbus Ave. 9pm-midnight. \$15. 426-1350.

Plum Island □ **Merrimack Valley Lesbians** hold a Thanksgiving celebration/potluck on Plum Island. 6:30pm. Info & directions: 508/465-7054.

Boston □ **Community Signing of the Lesbian/Gay Civil Rights Bill** with Congressmen Barney Frank, Gerry Studds, State Senator Michael Barrett & State Rep. Mark Roosevelt. At Faneuil Hall. 4pm. 262-1565.

Boston □ Les/Gay Rights Bill **Victory Party**. Join MGLPC, legislative sponsors & people from across the state at the Opera House, 539 Washington Street. 8pm-9:30pm, reception. 9:30pm-1am. Dance/music/cash bar. \$10, \$5 limited income. 262-1565.

Boston □ **Toshi Reagon** performs at Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. Also 11/19. 8pm. 536-0972 for ticket info.

Cambridge □ **Amethyst Women's** Winter Warm-Up Dance, 7 Temple Street. 8pm-11pm. Alcohol/drug/smoke free. \$5 more or less.

19 Sunday

Brookline □ **Am Tikva**, Making Contact Discussion: "Legal Issues Affecting Us". Workmen's Circle, 1762 Beacon Street. 1:30pm-3:30pm. 782-8894.

Jamaica Plain □ **Les/Gay Neighbors of J.P.** potluck at First Church Unitarian, 6 Eliot Street. 4pm-7pm. Kenn, 524-0833 or Margaret, 524-8070.

Clinton □ **WOBBLES** (West of Boston Lesbians) show lesbian videos. Janis or Cec, 508/386-7737 for details.

Boston □ **Downtown Lesbian Neighborhood Group** meets for brunch. Women who live/work/study in Back Bay/South End/Downtown. Joan, 266-5169.

20 Monday

Boston □ **Coalition for Les/Gay Civil Rights** meeting. At the Les/Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Rm. 202K. 8pm. Rich, 776-6956.

Boston □ **Community Advisory Forum** sponsored by Community Research Initiative of New England. 338 Newbury Street, 2nd floor. 7:30pm. 424-1524.

21 Tuesday

Boston □ **Gay Fathers of Greater Boston** meet to discuss "School Days: child/parent school issues." Lindemann Health Center, 25 Staniford Street. 8pm-10pm. 742-7897.

Boston □ **FCHC's Living Well Series**, Creating the Holidays You Want! with Rezakkah Norins. 332 Newbury Street. 6-7:30pm. Paul or Robb, 267-0900 to pre-register.

Cambridge □ **To a Safer Place** special showing to benefit the Virginia LaLonde Legal Defense Fund. Brattle Theatre. 6:30pm. \$10 suggested donation.

Boston □ **GCN Production Night**. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info, GCN: 617/426-4469.

22 Wednesday

Boston □ **GCN Mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5-10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 617/426-4469.

26 Sunday

Boston □ **Lesbian & Gay Neighbors of J.P.** meet for brunch at Doyle's Cafe. 11am. Mike O., 524-0557.

29 Wednesday

Boston □ **FCHC's Living Well Series**, Creating the Holidays You Want! with Rezakkah Norins. 332 Newbury Street. 6-7:30pm. Paul or Robb, 267-0900 to pre-register.

30 Thursday

Boston □ **GCN Production Night**. All welcome. Proofreading starts at 5pm. Paste-up after 7pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info, GCN: 617/426-4469.

Boston □ **Female Artists Against AIDS**, an evening of dance, music, visual arts and educational presentations about women and AIDS. To benefit Fenway Community Health Center. At the Hub Club, 533 Washington Street. 9pm. \$15 donation.

Boston □ **The Group**, a social/discussion group meets to discuss "Safer Sex." At the Les/Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street. 8pm. 266-1129.

December 1 Friday

Boston □ **GCN Mailing**. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5-10pm. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 617/426-4469.

Boston □ **Gay Games** lesbian soccer team forming to go to Vancouver in Aug. 1990. 7-9pm. Kim, 395-5329 for information and location.

Brookline □ **Swingtime**, les/gay/bi swing and ballroom dance. Ballet, Inc., 185 Corey Road. 8:30pm-midnight. 8:30-9:15, lessons. \$4.

Brookline □ **Am Tikva**, monthly Shabbot Service at Workmen's Circle, 1762 Beacon Street. 8pm. 782-8894.

Weekly events

Saturday

Boston □ **The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** new training session for hotline. 617/492-RAPE.

Boston □ **Gay Boston**, with Jim Voltz. Boston Neighborhood Network, channels A3 and A8. 7:30-8pm.

Boston □ **Body Electric**: healing with group sensual massage for gay and bisexual men. 551 Tremont. 7:30pm. \$12. 522-9164.

Sunday

Boston □ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth** (BAGLY). Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. 2-5pm. 354-6658.

Boston □ Metro Healing **healing group** for everyone. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. 426-9205.

Boston □ **The Gay Dating Show**, WUNR 1600 AM. 10:30pm-2:30am. Lesbians and Gay Men.

Boston □ **ALATEEN Group** open to lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth, 22 and under. 338 Newbury Street, rm. 202k. 6pm-7:30pm. Dave, 629-2518 or Frank, 666-8912.

Monday

Cambridge □ **Healing Circle** group healing. 5 Upland Rd. 7:30-9:30pm. \$5 suggested. 864-1989.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Rap**. 11/20 Coming Out Stories, 11/27 Night on the Town. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. Free. 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Boston □ **Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights** holds bi-weekly planning meeting. Les/Gay Service Center, 338 Newbury Street. 7pm. 776-6956.

Tuesday

Boston □ **Gay Fathers of Greater Boston** meet 1st and 3rd Tues. of the month. Lindemann Ctr., 2nd fl. 8-10pm. 742-7897.

Boston □ **Gay and Lesbian Support Group for Adult Children of Alcoholics**. Faulkner Hospital. 8:30-10pm. Intake interview required. 522-5800 x1908.

Boston □ **Lesbian and Gay Concert & Marching Band**. No audition necessary. YWCA, 120 Clarendon St. 7:15pm. Joe 625-3304, Zoe 396-2989.

Providence, RI □ **ACT UP/Rhode Island** open meetings. Rocket, 73 Richmond St. 7pm. 273-7228.

Boston □ **ACT UP/Boston** meets to confront the AIDS crisis. Gay/Lesbian Service Center, 338 Newbury Street, Rm. 203. 7pm. 49-ACT UP.

Cambridge □ **Bisexual Women's Rap**. 11/21 -isms, 11/28 The Holiday Seasons. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30-10pm. 354-8807.

Cambridge □ **30-plus Lesbian Rap** 7-8:30pm. 11/21 Lies, 11/28 Videotapes will be shown. The Women's Center (see above).

Cambridge □ **Women For Sobriety**, a self help group for women recovering from addictions. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-9:30pm. 354-8807

Arlington □ **Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays** meets on the second Tuesday of every month at First Parish Unitarian Church, 630 Mass. Ave. 7:15pm. Info: 547-2440 or 508/562-5807.

Wednesday

Boston □ **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth**. Open to youth age 22 and under. 35 Bowdoin St. New persons' meeting 6pm; women and men meet separately 6:45-7:30; general meeting at 7:30pm. 354-6658.

Boston □ **Bisexual Children of Alcoholics**. Mass. General Hosp., lower amphitheater 7:30pm. 259-1559.

Cambridge □ **Say it, Sister!** WMBR, 88.1 FM. 7-8pm.

Boston □ **Women's Self-Defense Classes** sponsored by Women's Self Defense Collective. Studio 3, 731 Harrison Ave., 2nd floor. 6-8pm. \$10-\$35 sliding scale per mo. 625-1115.

Cambridge □ **Lesbian Al-Anon** with childcare. Women's Center (see above). 6:30-8pm.

Thursday

Northampton □ **Valley Gay Alliance** meets 1st, 3rd Th. every month, basement of the Unitarian Church, 22 Main St. 7:30pm. 413/527-5310.

Stoneham □ **Incest Survivors Group** for women. New England Memorial Hospital, 5 Woodland Rd. S-6:30pm. Sara Epstein, 979-7025.

Cambridge □ **Wise Woman Tradition Herbal Medicine and Women's Wisdom Classes**. Sliding scale. Whitewolf, 277-8232.

Boston □ **Boston Area Rape Crisis Center** drop-in group for women who have been raped. 492-RAPE.

Cambridge □ **Incest Survivors Group**. Women's Center (see above). 7:30-9:30pm.

Cambridge □ Non-offending **male sexual abuse survivors** group meets first Thursday of every month. Cambridge Ctr. of Commerce conference room, 859 Mass. Ave. 8:30-10pm. \$5 donation. 498-9881.

Friday

Worcester □ AIDS Project-Worcester **support group** for HIV positive, PWAs, PWARCs, supporters. Open to all lesbians, gay men. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Dana 508/755-3773.

Boston □ **Healing group** for everyone. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. 426-9205.

Facing down demon memories

To *A Safer Place* chronicles one woman's journey of healing from the trauma of child sexual abuse

To A Safer Place. Directed by Beverly Shaffer in collaboration with Shirley Turcotte. Produced by Studio D. National Film Board of Canada. 58 minutes. To be screened Tuesday, November 21 at 6:30 p.m. at the Brattle Theater, to benefit Virginia LaLonde Legal Defense Fund (\$10 donation; more if/less if).

By Pam Mitchell

This award-winning documentary about recovery from the trauma of incestuous abuse covers a lot of ground in 58 minutes. We accompany Shirley Turcotte as she returns to Winnipeg, where she had been sexually abused by her father from infancy until she escaped from his home in her teens. We follow her around as she talks with her mother, her siblings, her old neighbors, the psychiatrist she saw for nine years. We join her as, with much trepidation, she enters the old farmhouse where most of the assaults occurred and beholds her bed in the basement. We see the wall beside it, the "safer place" that her mind would crawl into in order to disassociate from her body as it was being violated. We briefly meet the other members of her incest survivor support group, her husband, her young son, and her best friend. We see her at her workplace.

Synopsizing Turcotte's experience — 14 years of trauma and neglect, decades of recovery, and her resolution-and-moving-on period — couldn't be accomplished in less than an hour without sacrificing some depth. In order to keep up the pace and fit in



Shirley Turcotte (R) and her mother

all the material, the camera had to keep its distance as it methodically followed Turcotte around, and Turcotte's voiceover could rarely stop for breath or dramatic effect. As a result, though the film admirably hit nearly every item on my mental checklist for "Incest 101," it never fully grabbed me emotionally. Nor did it have the time to get very specific about what kind of societal intervention is needed on behalf of children currently being abused and neglected.

Still, what the film *does*, it does well: as an educational tool it covers all the basics with clarity, thoroughness and sensitivity. And its even keel may have been precisely what the filmmakers had in mind. In the course of my own recovery I've grown accustomed to hearing survivors speak with an intensity that might send many viewers right through the roof — particularly those who have sexual abuse histories of their own that they have yet to deal with. Turcotte and Shaffer no doubt were aware of the potential for losing viewers to unexpected panic attacks and flashbacks.

Turcotte herself appears to have gotten beyond the worst of the panic and the flashbacks, to have successfully faced down the

demon memories that follow sexual assault survivors into adulthood. She has come out the other end with a successful job, a seemingly solid long-term relationship with her husband, and a healthy bond with her young son. This state of recovery gave her the strength and perspective necessary to offer us this film, and can serve as an inspiration to the rest of us who are still struggling along — including Turcotte's own sister, who is only beginning to get her feet on the ground, and her brother, a bit of a lost soul who has been in and out of jail.

Turcotte's relative success may in part result from the fact that she had the good fortune to stumble upon some useful seat-of-the-pants counseling at a time when therapists knew very little about how to work with survivors of incest and other extreme trauma. Her old psychiatrist, who she started seeing in the '60s while she was still a teenager, describes in the film how Turcotte used to regress and re-live episodes of the abuse during therapy, and how frightened he was by these dramatic sessions. He annoyingly mislabels this behavior — familiar to many survivors of trauma — as "psychotic." However, back then when it really mattered he not only clearly believed that Turcotte's abuse happened but also was willing to ride out his own fear and allow her to do what she needed to do. At the time, medication and/or institutionalization were much more common responses to such attempts at healing, setting back the recovery of many a survivor and no doubt completely destroying a few.

In addition to Turcotte's advanced state of recovery, other somewhat unusual factors in her life made this film possible. Her mother and all three of her siblings were willing to be in contact with her and to participate in the project, and all could recall details of the abuse to an extent very atypical of families in which extensive abuse started in the children's infancy and persisted over a period of years. Family members keep referring to a court case pertaining to the abuse that made the newspapers in their town; this public and shared experience at a time when the abuse was still occurring may account for their ability to remember and conceptualize so much of what happened to them.

In some of the film's more wrenching footage, a visibly agitated Turcotte queries her old next-door neighbors about what

they saw and what they noticed. They remembered her as a "grubby," drabby-dressed child who lacked "sparkle," and recalled that she and her siblings were often covered with bruises. But they nonetheless claimed ignorance about the daily brutality going on under their noses. Turcotte confronted them point-blank about what they would do if such abuse were in the present. The woman said she would now be much more likely to notice signs of abuse and to intervene. Her husband, on the other hand, stated flatly that he would still consider it inappropriate to step in between a father and his children.

Their divergence of opinion illustrates a battle of ideologies that has been raging in the wake of the women's liberation movement. Many people still persist in looking the other way when intrafamily sexual violence occurs, continuing to see children as private property. But like Turcotte's woman next door (and, hopefully, like many people who will view this video, either on TV or in counseling or educational settings), more and more people are beginning to recognize a shared responsibility to deliver "to a safer place" any child whose parents are either abusing her/him or failing to provide protection.

In Turcotte's case, one parent abused her while the other did absolutely nothing on her behalf. (Her mother's appearances in the film show her to be a pathetic shadow figure incapable of parenting; Turcotte is a lot more charitable towards her than I would be.) But even when a parent does act to protect her (or his) child against a perpetrator of abuse, s/he can't do it without societal backing. So it is fitting that *To A Safer Place* is being screened as a benefit for Virginia LaLonde. LaLonde is appealing a 1989 court decision that placed her daughter Nicole in the legal custody of the man Nicole has said sexually abused her. □

Pam Mitchell has had to spend eight long years organizing her life around recovery from the traumatic effects of being sexually abused by both of her parents and by her grandmother. She hopes one day to reach "a safer place" where she'll be able to focus more of her political energy and her writing on other things.

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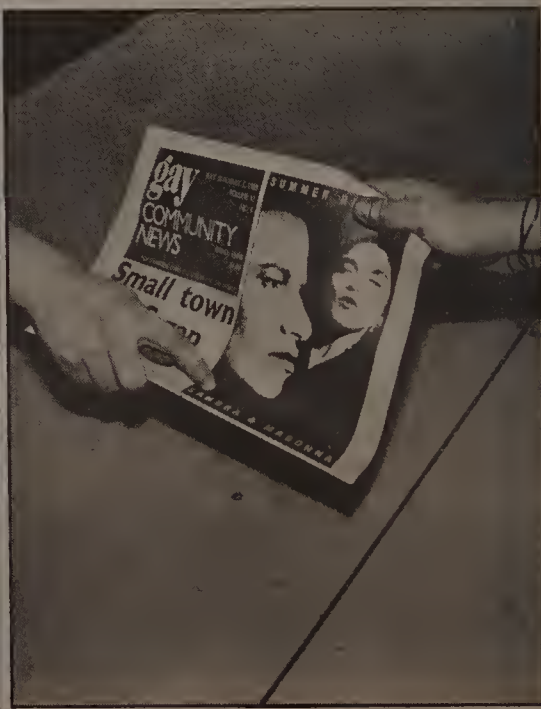
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